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The donkey that roared

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64-PAGE MAGAZINE

Top hats and pearls

LADIES' DAY AT ASCOT

A football-crazy nation gears down for Blank Monday

BY JANINE GIBSON

THE MONDAY morning sickie is likely to hit epidemic proportions next week when millions take time off work to watch England's opening World Cup game against Tunisia.

As businesses grapple with Blank Monday - things are worse in London where there is an underground strike - BBC insiders estimated that at least

16 million sets will be tuned in at 1pm for its live coverage.

At least one employer made a pre-emptive strike. Ford has threatened its 30,000-strong, predominantly male workforce that anyone "chucking a sickie" faces disciplinary action.

Oddly, production ceased yesterday at its largest plant, Dagenham, Essex, due to an unexplained shortage of key components and it appears

production may be affected for a couple of days.

Workers in London will have an added incentive to stay at home on Monday, as Tube workers begin a two-day walk-out on Sunday night.

Fliers in London Underground's staff areas read: "Relax, put your feet up and watch the football courtesy of [transport union] the RMT."

Hundreds of construction

workers on the Jubilee Line Tube extension, which is months behind schedule, have hit the jackpot. They are being paid not to work on Monday afternoon after contractors Drak and Skul reported that staff returning from watching the game in the pub could be a safety nightmare.

The more realistic firms are being creative in an attempt to lure staff into the office. Many

are installing televisions or radios, some even inviting in clients to watch in hospitable comfort.

But it seems the best chance of workplace footy is if your company happens to be backing the tournament. Hewlett Packard and BP, both sponsors of France 98, have both installed television screens in their staff restaurants.

Sainsbury has gone one step

further by introducing theme clothing - staff will be sent polo shirts and caps to celebrate sport at work and can watch the match on a rota basis.

Advertising agency Ogilvy and Mather has allocated a room with a large-screen television. There is even a bar for the evening games.

Even year 5 at Our Lady and St Joseph RC Primary School in London - who, it appears, have

a very understanding teacher - will be watching the match.

Labour MPs have exercised their initiative and clubbed together not only to buy a widescreen television but also to hire a Commons committee room complete with food and drink. For the bargain price of only £50 each, the 60 MPs will be assured private viewing and after the tournament there will be a second-hand widescreen

set on offer in Westminster, if anyone is interested.

The Association of British Chambers of Commerce, which has muttered darkly about losses in revenue, is leading from the front. As its annual conference is scheduled to begin in Birmingham on Tuesday, delegates are being encouraged to arrive a day early - doubtless to sit in their hotel rooms working industriously.

Japan crisis shakes world

BY HAMISH MCRAE

JAPAN, THE world's second-largest economy, confirmed yesterday that it has plunged into recession, sparking fears of a global market meltdown that could drag the West into economic decline.

Markets throughout Asia slumped after Japan announced that output had fallen for the second consecutive quarter - the classic definition of recession. The London stock market also got the jitters as the Nikkei 225 was wiped off share values and the FTSE 100 index suffered one of its biggest two-day falls this year.

Inevitably, there is a worry that if the world's second-largest economy and what has been its fastest-growing region head into a long depression

the depreciation of the yen, which has fallen by 11 per cent in the past two months, will reach a stage where it destabilises the whole of the world economy. It fell yesterday to ¥144.77 against the dollar, compared with a peak of ¥90 in April 1995. The markets now expect it to fall to a rate above ¥150.

The markets also fear that the fall of the yen will force a devaluation of the Chinese yuan and the Hong Kong dollar. Any intention to devalue has been strongly denied by the Chinese authorities, but were it to happen the other countries of the region might be pushed into a further round of devaluations.

The fall in demand and the lack of confidence in the yen have depressed share prices, pushing the Nikkei-Dow index briefly below 15,000 yesterday. It recovered to close at 15,022, but the fragility of share prices is of particular concern in Japan, because the banks hold large portfolios of company shares. Falling share prices therefore threaten to bankrupt the banks. While the Japanese authorities have promised to protect depositors, ordinary Japanese savers remain fearful for their savings.

Japan is now the only member of the Group of Seven - the seven largest economies in the world - that has failed to recover from the recession of the early 1990s. It has been particularly hard-hit by the economic problems of the developing countries of east Asia, which take more than one third of its exports. Proportionately this is much higher than exports from the US and Europe to the region, which in most cases are less than 10 per cent of the total.

But Japan has also suffered from shrinking demand from consumers at home. Retail sales earlier this year were running more than 8 per cent down - here in Britain they are more than 4 per cent up.

Consumers are frightened partly because they are worried that they might lose their savings due to banking collapses, but also because they might lose their jobs, despite supposed "jobs for life" in Japan, unemployment has been rising.

They will drag down the rest of the world.

Figures published yesterday show that Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 1.3 per cent in the three months to the end of March, equivalent to a decline at an annual rate of 5.3 per cent. This follows a decline in the final quarter of last year, and leaves Japan's GDP 0.7 per cent lower than it was a year ago. This is the first full-year decline since 1974, following the first oil shock.

The decline was sharper than expected by the markets, which had forecast a fall of only about half a per cent, and reflects both a lack of confidence among consumers in Japan and a fall in exports to the rest of east Asia.

The decline in the Japanese economy has led to fears that

Japan MORTIMER, the prominent Labour "luvvy" and creator of Rumpole, is one of three knights of London theatreland in Tony Blair's second honours list today.

David Hare, the playwright, and Ian Holm, the actor, are also knighted in the Birthday Honours list, and Peter Brook, the Paris-based theatre director, is made a Companion of Honour; a restricted award for service of conspicuous national importance.

Other headline honours in-

clude peerages for Kathleen Richardson, the Free Church minister and the first ordained woman to go to the Lords, and Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of British Airways. There are knighthoods for the BBC's John Birt, England's 1966 World Cup star Geoff Hurst, John Browne, chief executive of BP, Stuart Hampshire, chairman of the John Lewis Partnership, and John Elliot Gardner, the conductor.

But the Prime Minister's official spokesman argued that greater prominence and honour was being directed towards people in front-line public service, like education and health

- and that in future that drive would move into other prime areas of policy, like law and order and the environment.

He said the Prime Minister wanted peerages and knighthoods to be a measure of the contribution people were making in significant areas of public life. "The system is changing," he promised.

In descending order of rank, Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) include Victoria Gwendoline, the writer, June Whitfield, the actress, and Barry Norman, the BBC film critic.

Officers of the Order of the

British Empire (OBE) include Leslie Phillips, the actor, Wayne Sleep, the dancer, Bruce Forsyth, the entertainer, and Sir Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell, the athletes. Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) include Alec Stewart, the cricketer, Lennox Lewis, the boxer, and Peter Cattaneo, director of *The Full Monty*.

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Officers of the Order of the

Innocent man freed after 23 years

BY JASON BENNETTO AND LINUS GREGORIADIS

A PENSIONER went on the steps of the High Court yesterday after his conviction for murder, for which he spent 23 years in jail, was quashed.

Patrick Nicholls, 69, was cleared of suffocating and beating to death an elderly family friend. He can now expect up to £400,000 in compensation after

spending more than a third of his life behind bars in one of the worst-ever miscarriages of justice.

As *The Independent* revealed on Tuesday, Mr Nicholls' conviction was overturned after new evidence showed that the woman he was convicted of killing most likely died of natural causes.

After the hearing Mr Nicholls, seated in a wheelchair at

the entrance of the London Law Courts, said: "I would like to thank my mother, Ida, for the help she gave me in these past 23 years. She died a year ago," before breaking down in tears.

He later said: "I always knew I would get out. Always. Somehow or other I still retained a little faith in the system." He added that it was "wonderful" to be free.

Mr Nicholls, who has been

on bail since March, was jailed in 1975 for the murder of Gladys Heath, 74, at her home in Worthing, West Sussex. Mr Nicholls always claimed he found Mrs Heath collapsed on the floor.

Lord Justice Rook said yesterday: "We allow this appeal because the pathological evidence that ... natural causes could be excluded has now been shown to be unreliable."

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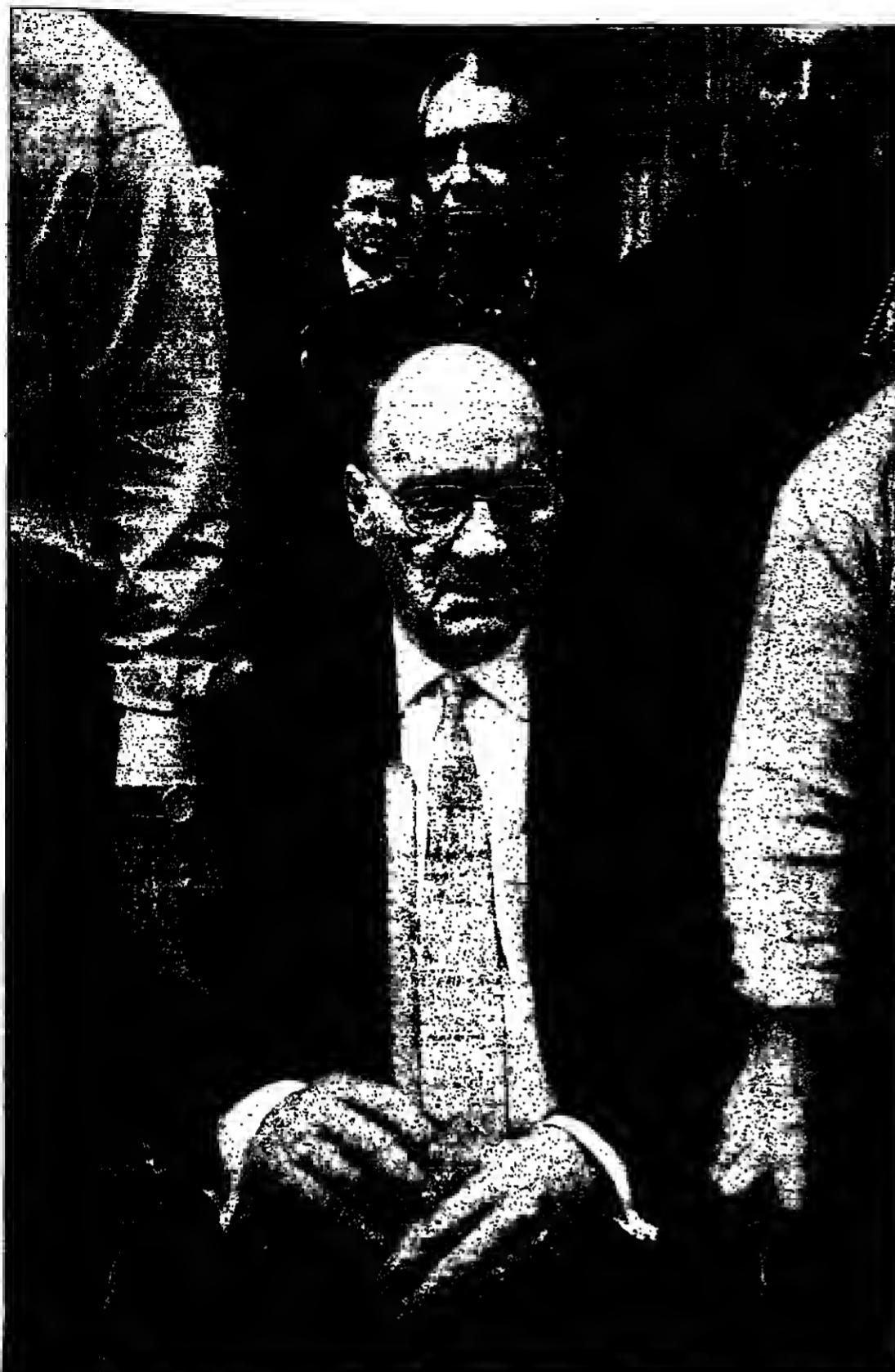
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How an unusual friendship formed between one of the Birmingham Six and a man who fought for his innocence and won

Bond that unites two wronged men



Hill pushing Nicholls away from the court after his acquittal yesterday

Tom Pilston

BY JOHN DAVISON
and LINUS GREGORIADIS

PADDY NICHOLLS enjoyed his first pint as a free man yesterday afternoon, after 23 years as a convicted killer. With him in the bar of the Irish Centre in Camden, north London, was his friend and support for almost all of those years, Paddy Hill - himself a famous victim of wrongful imprisonment.

During the press conference that followed, Mr Nicholls' smiling demeanour faltered just for a second when he mentioned Mr Hill's name during a long list of "thank you" dedications, and he momentarily broke down with emotion. It was a measure of the closeness that has developed between the two men, even though they did not meet for many years.

Earlier in the day, while waiting for the court's decision, Mr Hill, who was acquitted after serving 16 years for the IRA pub bombings in Birmingham, told of the secret network of innocent prisoners within the system. While they were often in separate prisons, these men would keep in constant touch to offer each other moral support and advice as to how they should continue their battles for justice.

In fact, the first time Mr Hill actually met his friend was after his own release in 1991 when he started to visit him in jail. But by then they had been in close contact for 13 years. The nearest they had previously come to meeting was when Mr Nicholls had arrived at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight in 1978, just as Mr Hill was leaving.

"Prisons were small places for people like us. There were only eight or nine prisons they would house us in," said Mr Hill, a slight, greying 53-year-old. "Between the prisons, you find out on the grapevine who is innocent and who isn't. People who protest their innocence get moved around a lot, it seemed, because we were always bucking the system and not conforming."

They would keep in touch, he said, using this grapevine and through what they call "dead letters" - notes sent outside the prison postal system, which is still subject to censorship for category A prisoners.

"You could communicate by word of mouth and you could give letters to people who were in transit. We had this network set up all over the country," said Mr Hill. The Guildford Four, the Bridgewater Four, the

Cardiff Three and the Tottenham Three were all part of the system.

Cynics might say that everyone in prison would claim to be innocent. But Mr Hill explained that it was not hard to sort out the genuine cases from those who were trying it on.

"You get a lot of guilty men who pretend they are innocent and it's all a ploy, but after a while they just give up and admit the truth," he said. "You found out who was fitter up. With Paddy, he never stopped fighting. That man could have had parole 10 years ago if he'd just said he was guilty."

Mr Hill said that he had been fighting for Paddy Nicholls' acquit-

ment.

They now live together in Paddy Hill's flat in north London, a condition which had been set by the court. Mr Nicholls' family deserved

it, he said. "They're nice people who believe they have a genuine grievance are more likely to end up in trouble within the system through mounting protests, and so suffer segregation and other punishments. Also, like Paddy Nicholls, they can find themselves serving extra time because of a refusal to admit guilt."

"It's like a Catch 22," said Mark Freeman, assistant general secretary of the Prison Officers' Association. "There is a culture in the system that says that someone's release should be put back unless they address their crime, and attend classes and therapy sessions. In general, this is a very important part of protecting the public, but for an innocent man it is very difficult. Either he sells out and admits his guilt, even though he knows he is not guilty, or he stays in prison."

Chris Mullin, the Labour MP for Sunderland South who championed the cases of the Birmingham Six and gave advice to those working for Mr Nicholls, says a further problem occurs when an innocent man is finally released. Whereas someone leading up to release from a life sentence would be gradually reintroduced into society through courses and increased liberties within prisons, those who are found innocent on appeal are immediately pitched out into the world.

"This can have disastrous results," said Mr Mullin. "They find it impossible to cope. I think this is the greatest unresolved issue in this area."

Despite today's victory, it seems on recent experience that Mr Nicholls will have little opportunity for traditional forms of celebration. He cannot drink, maybe occasionally visiting the pub to sip a half-pint of Guinness, and his general state of health remains extremely poor - "he's semi-paralysed", says Mr Hill.



Paddy Nicholls drinking in freedom in the Irish Centre

however, be pursuing his claim for compensation through the European courts, on the grounds that the Home Office "hasn't got a clue".

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Just how well Paddy Nicholls learns to cope remains to be seen. Certainly, he can count on the continued support of the informal network, if not on any help from the system that wrongfully imprisoned him for so long.

Top French perfumier shot by masked raiders

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

JEAN-PAUL GUERLAIN, one of the world's leading perfumers, was shot and wounded yesterday by a gang of masked raiders who pillaged his chateau west of Paris.

Mr Guerlain's estate manager was shot in the chest and two other employees were slightly injured during a four-hour raid on the sprawling property. The gang of 10 to 12 men, who ransacked several buildings on the estate, "Meusnes", near Montfort-l'Amaury in the Yvelines, escaped with cash, jewellery and silverware worth several hundred thousand pounds.

Mr Guerlain, 63, is known as one of the last "noses" - or old-fashioned scent designers - in the business. He sold the 170-year-old family firm, which claims to be the first specialist perfume house, to the French luxury goods group LVMH four years ago. Mr Guerlain remained the company's chief perfume adviser.

On the day before the raid, he had launched his newest creation, Guerlainade, at a media show on the Champs-Elysées.



Guerlain: victim of 'savage attack' Gamma/FSP

Police said that the raiders, armed with revolvers and pump-action rifles, shot Mr Guerlain in the thigh and his manager was "in critical condition" last night. Two other employees were slightly injured; one was beaten up by the raiders; the other jumped from a window to try to escape.

It is thought that the perfumer tried to raise the alarm

The chief public prosecutor of the Versailles area, Yves Collet, described the raid as a "savage attack" in which several members of the family and staff were threatened and beaten in order to force them to reveal and open the safes. Fury police officers were assigned to the case.

The Guerlain label was involved in a brief fracas with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, last year, after it claimed in advertising that he regularly used its men's cologne, Habit Rouge. The company withdrew the ads after Downing Street issued a denial.

The perfume house was founded by Pierre Guerlain on the Rue de Rivoli in Paris in 1828. Its international reputation was made by a perfume called Shalimar, which was first marketed in 1925 and is still its biggest seller today.

Jean-Paul, the fifth generation of the family to head the business, says he can distinguish between 3,000 scents, which he personally scours the world to buy. He created his first perfume in 1889, and his best-known creations include Chambre (1968), Nohema (1979) and Heritage (1992).

Woodward launches new challenge

BY DAVID USBOURNE
in New York

IN A MANOEUVRE that could further delay a resolution of the Louise Woodward murder case, her defence team has again challenged the results of the post-mortem performed on baby Matthew Eappen.

A motion filed with the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court demands the release of information about the professional history of the coroner who conducted the examination, Dr Gerald Feigin. He resigned from the medical examiner's office in May and is now working in New Jersey.

Dr Feigin is under a cloud because of revelations that he may have bungled an earlier manslaughter case, in which a teacher died after being assaulted by a student. New evidence suggests the crime was labelled as manslaughter incorrectly. The charges against the boy are under review.

Dr Feigin ruled that the teacher, David McHugh, had died from the blows. Subse-

quently, another examiner ascertained that the teacher had had a heart condition that could have caused his death.

The testimony of Dr Feigin in Woodward's 1997 trial was pivotal to the prosecution's contention that Matthew Eappen died because of a two-and-a-half-inch skull fracture caused by shaking and battering inflicted by the defendant. The defence contends that the injury was weeks old.

In its motion, the defence argues that had they been conducted on the boy, similar

microscopic tests would have uncovered information to exonerate Woodward. It asks the court to release all information regarding the McHugh case.

Woodward was convicted of second-degree murder last October but two weeks later the judge reduced the verdict to manslaughter and freed her.

Seven Supreme Justices have been weighing appeals in the case since a hearing in early March and had been expected to rule in the next few weeks. An option would be to call for a re-trial.

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A 19th-century Noh mask of a demon, which will feature among lots in the Japanese works of art sale during Sotheby's AsiaWeek next week

Neville Elder

Nickell detective sues police

A WOMAN detective who took part in a controversial "honeytrap" operation involving Colin Stagg, prime suspect in the Rachel Nickell murder investigation, is suing Scotland Yard after taking early retirement.

The officer, known only by her undercover name of Lizzie James, has been off work for the past 18 months suffering from stress.

Her civil action alleges she was not offered leave or professional support following her "traumatic" role in the investigation, and had suffered emotional problems as a result.

By KIM SENGUPTA

The 33-year-old married detective constable has spent 13 years with the Metropolitan Police. If she wins her legal action the compensation package and various benefits she is entitled to could add up to several hundred thousand pounds.

"Lizzie" befriended Mr Stagg in an attempt to get information which would incriminate him over the frenzied knife murder of Ms Nickell on Wimbledon Common, southwest London, in 1992.

The operation was so secret that the officer was ordered not to tell her husband, who also works for the Metropolitan Police.

The undercover officer posed as a disturbed woman looking for a partner to indulge in sometimes violent sexual fantasies. The pair built up a relationship in which Mr Stagg is alleged to have talked about sexual acts involving knives and bondage. His lawyers argue that he was enticed to do so by the policewoman.

The operation - which was supervised by forensic psychologist Paul Britton - came in for scathing criticism from Mr Justice Ognall at the Old Bailey when he threw out charges against Mr Stagg in 1994. He said it was "a scandalous attempt to incriminate a suspect by positive and deceptive conduct of the grossest kind".

The detective constable continued to work afterwards for Scotland Yard but began to suffer from stress when she learnt that Mr Britton planned to reveal details of her role in the inquiry in his memoirs.

In the book, Mr Britton said the blonde detective was ideal for the undercover job because of her good looks, bubbly personality, and experience in infiltrating criminal organisations.

He wrote: "This time she was to be a damaged and deeply disturbed young woman, nursing a dark sexual secret and looking for a man who shared similar experiences."

Friends of "Lizzie" say that what she had to do had far-reaching consequences. Her marriage suffered, and she put on weight.

"She was put in front of Stagg as a sex object and she

doesn't want to be seen as sexy any more."

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police Federation said it was backing the detective constable's legal action.

"She has taken early retirement due to the trauma she suffered as a result of the role she played in the Nickell investigation," the spokesman said.

"We are pursuing a civil claim against the Metropolitan Police Commissioner on the grounds that she was not offered sufficient support in dealing with the difficult experiences she went through."

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TO TALK
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YOU
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Dr Basu, found guilty of professional misconduct Raymonds

Doctor guilty after girl, 10, dies at dentist

A CONSULTANT anaesthetist was yesterday found guilty of serious professional misconduct after a 10-year-old girl died at a dentist's surgery.

Dr Tapas Kumar Basu failed to follow basic guidelines in a routine operation on Katie Dougal and made inadequate attempts to resuscitate her when she collapsed, the General Medical Council said.

The verdict will renew patients' fears about the safety of general anaesthesia given outside hospitals. Guidelines for dentists were tightened after a series of deaths in which dentists, acting as their own anaesthetists, failed to monitor the heart rate and breathing of their patient as they operated.

Dr Basu was a consultant anaesthetist called to assist at an operation on Katie, of Breaston, in Derbyshire, in January 1996 after a school playground fall in which she broke two front teeth. Her mother took her to the dental surgery in Long Eaton, Derbyshire, immediately after the accident and was told by her dentist, Mark Duckmanton, to bring her back the next day.

Dr Basu, who attended the surgery to give her a general anaesthetic, said it would be no more than a "cat's scratch". But he failed to

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

monitor her heart rate on an electrocardiogram (ECG) and failed to use a capnograph to monitor carbon dioxide levels, because it was broken.

There was a working capnograph in the practice's second surgery, which was not in use. The GMC heard that he had also ignored three sets of dental anaesthetic guidelines with which he had failed to familiarise himself.

When the girl's heart rate dropped, he ventilated her lungs but failed to use a defibrillator to restart her heart. That was left to the ambulance men who were called to the surgery arriving after eight minutes. They used the defibrillator seven times to deliver shocks to her heart but it was too late. She was pronounced dead on arrival at Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham.

The GMC's professional conduct committee yesterday found that Dr Basu, 53, failed to react "adequately" to the emergency, did not use the correct monitors during the operation and had not kept up to date with the latest developments in his field.

However, Dr Basu, who now works at Neath General Hospital in West Glamorgan, escaped being

struck off the Medical Register. Instead the council imposed a three-year condition on his registration restricting him to work with adult patients in hospital, where there are back-up staff and facilities.

Sir Herbert Duttie, chairman of the committee, said: "Trust lies at the heart of the doctor-parent relationship. Patients, and in the case of children, their parents, entrust doctors with their lives and wellbeing.

"They expect, and are entitled to expect that doctors will keep their medical knowledge and skills in the speciality in which they are practising up to date and that they will act appropriately in an emergency. The facts found proved against you show that you failed to provide an adequate standard of practice in this tragic case."

Katie's mother, Patricia Dougal, earlier told the hearing how she squeezed her daughter's hand as Dr Basu gave her an injection.

"He said it would be like a cat's scratch and she was talking about her two cats. I was rubbing the back of her hand and she went to sleep."

Ms Dougal said she then went into a side room and did not realise anything was wrong until she heard a buzzer alarm 15-20 minutes later.

Dr Basu refused to comment.



Katie Dougal, who died after being administered anaesthetic

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After decades blue whales come home

BLUE WHALES, the world's largest animals, which were driven to the edge of extinction by hunting, have been sighted again in British waters for the first time in at least 20 years.

They have been spotted from the survey ships of oil exploration companies in the "Atlantic Frontier", the region to the north-west of Scotland likely to be the next big oil production area.

Five of the animals, which can be 100ft long and weigh more than 200 tons, were seen last year, according to an unpublished report of the Government's Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the agency which looks after wildlife for Great Britain.

"It's fantastically good news," said Mark Simmonds, marine biologist with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society.

"World-wide they were almost extinct and they had certainly vanished from sight in the North Atlantic in recent decades."

Indications that a population of blue whales was inhabiting the waters west of Scotland first came two years ago from the United States navy's top-secret Sound Surveillance System.

BY MICHAEL McCARTHY
Environment Correspondent

which once tracked Soviet submarines for hundreds of miles across the Atlantic using seabed hydrophones down to 10,000 feet.

As well as the sounds the vessels made, they also picked up much whale song, the deep noises the animals make, and American zoologists picked out the blue whale amongst them.

The animals were first seen in 1996, when two were spotted, according to the report's author, marine biologist Carolyn Stone, who saw one herself.

"They have a very distinct tall, slender blow [the spout] which can be up nine metres tall, and a small fin for their very large size," she said.

But before the sightings from the seismic survey ships, which fire sound waves at the seabed to search for oil, there had been none for many years, the last recorded being a single sighting off north-west Ireland in May 1977.

The whaling slaughter in the early decades of this century reduced the blue whale population in the North Atlantic, once hundreds of thousands, to an estimated 3,000 today.

"It is very significant but it is too early to say if it indicates any sort of population recovery," Mr Simmonds said.

"It also emphasises the importance of this area of the ocean for whales, and the importance of controlling the new industrial activities that are taking place in it."

Blue whales are the largest animals ever to have lived on earth, bigger than any of the dinosaurs. At birth a calf is more than 20ft long and weighs two and a half tons; when fully grown, the animal's heart is the height of a tall man, weighs as much as a horse and pumps blood through arteries so big a child could crawl through them.



Feeding time for a blue whale. The biggest animal that has ever lived on earth, it has been seen again off Scotland

Planet Earth Pictures

Weldon takes on feminists in TV series

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

THE FIRST feminist television drama is to be screened next month on Channel 4.

Big Women, written by the novelist Fay Weldon and produced by the one-time revolutionary activist, Tariq Ali, chronicles the rise of a feminist publishing house through the Seventies.

The series, which starts on 2 July and stars Daniella Nardini (Anna from *This Life*), Clare Holman and Anastasia Hille, seems certain to re-ignite the debate on the state of feminism, not least among the original feminist publishers, Virago and Women's Press, who may not like the way the fictional publishing house is portrayed.

Fay Weldon, who has already published a novel based on her TV script, has suffered accusations of feminist revisionism and betrayal. Polly Toynbee, the social commentator, has called her feminism's Winnie Mandela.

In the series, the women set up the company, Medusa, after much drinking and debating. They celebrate by dancing naked together. One decides there and then to leave her husband and children, before going naked out into the street.

Weldon, said yesterday: "The series was Tariq's idea. But I go on thinking that anything that is done by men and women together has a kind of energy and life as God intended. Things that women do together tend to be more dutiful.

"It's amazing this is the first drama about feminism there

has been on television. But for so long we haven't been able to see the wood for the trees.

"Perhaps the series will show how dangerous ideologies andisms are ... you've got women with permission to hate men now and that's what we have to pull back from."

Big Women opens with feminists putting up posters declaring that "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle", and defacing sexist posters with the words "This exploits women".

But Fay Weldon said yesterday: "I would like men to go around now saying 'This advert diminishes men. Look at those ads with women putting a stiletto heel on a man's face.'

"Imagine it the other way round. It's appalling. In the under-40s sexism exists even more now from women to men than from men to women."

"In the last episode I have a young woman who goes around firing all the men. I thought she was dreadful, but all the young female reviewers love her."

According to insiders, making the series has had a radicalising effect on the young actresses involved.

Anastasia Hille, who plays Stephie the woman who leaves her family, said: "Some of the things feminists were saying in the Seventies sound ludicrous now. But I respect Stephie and feel a sense of indebtedness to women like her."

Space invaders were not aliens, say police

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Science & Technology Editor

THEY CAME from outer space, heading for the Earth in the hundreds. To those on the ground, they were visible as blazing blue lights whizzing through the night sky across England.

But the hundreds of worried callers who contacted police claiming to have seen a single blue light bigger than a car, or a burning aeroplane, or (of course) a flying saucer, were wrong. "The Martians haven't landed," one policeman reassured a caller.

Instead, it was a harmless meteor shower, in which none of the rocks was big enough even to hit the ground before burning up.

Police forces in counties running from Devon to the Midlands - and including some as

far afield as Wales and Sussex - received calls around midnight on Thursday.

Sergeant John Drake, of Staffordshire Police, said: "We had more than a dozen calls around midnight from people who had seen a single, blue light that was bigger than a car."

"Many officers from police cars also radioed in saying they had seen the same thing."

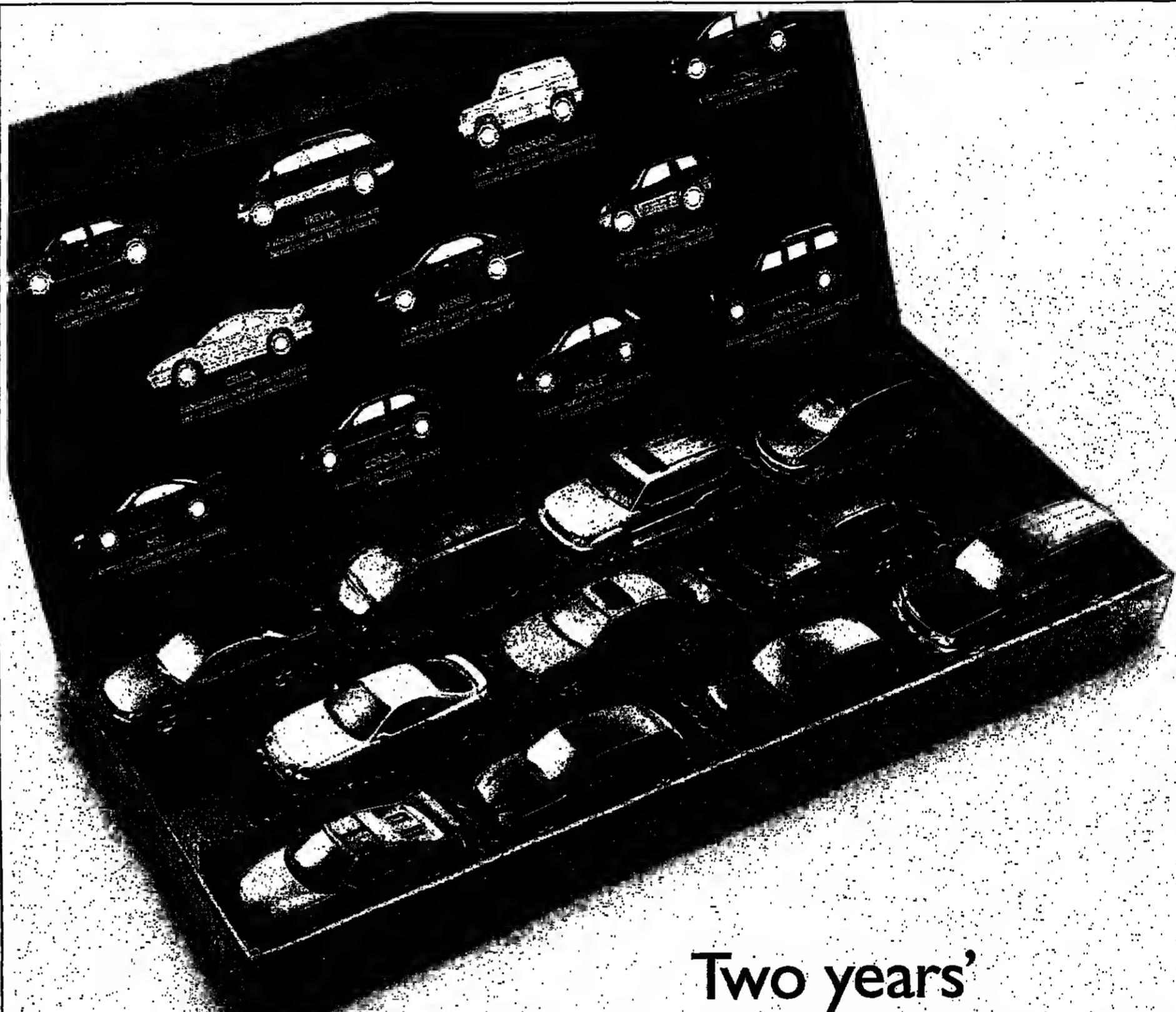
The lights are caused by the rocks heating up and burning as they fall into the upper atmosphere at about 70,000 kilometres per hour.

An estimated 14 million meteors enter the atmosphere every day. Most are only as big as a grain of sand.

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Schools told stop selection on ability

SCHOOLS SHOULD stop selecting some of their pupils by academic ability, according to new Government guidelines. The interim guidelines, published yesterday, also propose sorting out some of the problems parents face getting their children into the school of their choice by setting up a "clearing house" with a single application form and timetable.

In his foreword, David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, gives the clearest signal so far that he expects partial selection, allowed by the previous government, to end. "Partial selection based on academic ability is not in the best interests of parents and children."

He points out that new independent adjudicators will be able to abolish it if complaints are made to them either by local authorities or parents.

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Grammar schools will continue, unless parents vote to abolish them.

Under the last government all schools were allowed to select up to 15 per cent of pupils and opted-out schools could select more with the permission of the Secretary of State. The School Standards and Framework Bill, before Parliament, allows partial selection to continue but gives the adjudicators power to end it.

The guidelines aim to end the "admissions gridlock" over school places, attacked by the Audit Commission last year, with one in five parents failing to get their first choice of school. Problems have arisen because of the last government's policy of letting opted-out schools run their own admissions.

Parents in places such as Bromley, Hertfordshire and Wandsworth, in London, may have to apply to seven or eight schools and still not find a place for their child. The system enables some parents to hold on to several offers of school places while others face months of uncertainty because they have not been offered one.

In Watford, Hertfordshire, in March this year, 1,000 children, a third of the total, were without a school place because the rest were holding on to several offers from grant-maintained schools which all had their own admissions timetables. Opted-out schools are blocking the county council's efforts to set up a clearing house system, and Mr Blunkett announced yesterday that he was imposing a co-ordinated admissions scheme on the county.

Under the new guidelines, all schools in an area should now work with the local authority to produce common timetables and a single application form by September 2000, say the guidelines. Ideally, the arrangements should start this autumn.

Admissions criteria should be clear, fair and objective, under the proposed changes. Interviews will be outlawed except for church schools which want to determine a child's religious affiliation. All schools and the local authority will have to discuss their admissions policies in local forums and the independent adjudicators will settle disputes.

Margaret Tulloch, of the Campaign for the Advancement of State Education, the parents' pressure group, said she welcomed the general thrust of the guidelines. "We shall have to see what happens on the ground," she said.



Pupils at St George's, where a memorial plaque has been erected for former head Philip Lawrence Andrew Blaize

SUDAN EMERGENCY

URGENT UPDATE

FACT Without UNICEF emergency supplies Tabitha could have died

When two year old Tabitha's mother brought her to a UNICEF-supplied feeding centre she was severely malnourished and suffering from diarrhoea. She was probably just a few days from death.

Now, after being fed UNIMIX (a nutritious multi-vitamin porridge) and treated with oral rehydration salts, Tabitha has gained enough weight and strength to sit up and feed herself - you can see her progress in the table below.

Thanks to people's generous support, Tabitha and thousands of children like her are receiving the emergency aid they so desperately need.

FACT UNICEF is providing more than just food to the children of Sudan

Although most press coverage has focused on delivering emergency food to the children, UNICEF has been working to ensure that they can eat in the future - by providing seeds and tools to try and secure a successful September harvest.

UNICEF is also continuing to provide urgently needed medical supplies to the feeding centres, as children who are malnourished are particularly vulnerable to life-threatening diseases.

FACT Children are still in danger and supplies are running out

UNICEF desperately needs to raise more funds to help children survive the coming months. With your help we could:

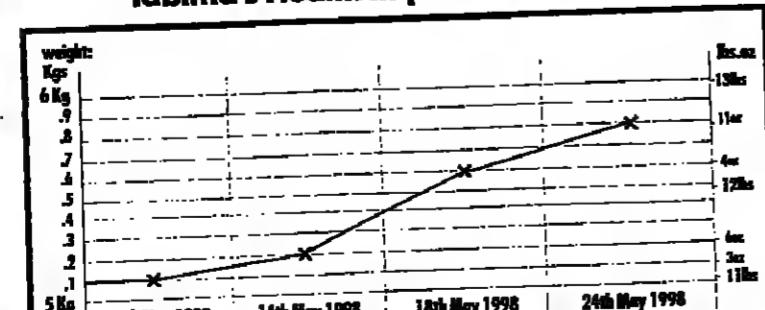
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Tabitha's Health Improvement Chart



Tabitha and her mother

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BY DIANA BLAIZE

TWO AND a half years after headteacher Philip Lawrence was stabbed to death, the London secondary school that he had turned around has been declared a failing school.

The decision means that the school inspectorate, Ofsted, has branded half of the eight secondary schools in the borough of Westminster as having "serious problems" and two have been declared to be failing.

The Ofsted report on St George's School, in Maida Vale, is thought to conclude that the standard of teaching overall is below the acceptable levels.

The inspectors are critical of "pupils' attainment" which "remains below the national expectation".

They say "improvements are required in tackling poor attendance and truancy", and the proportion of lessons which are good or satisfactory is around 10 per cent below the national average.

The report is also critical of the management of the school which inspectors believe is insufficient to deal with serious difficulties the school faces.

When Mr Lawrence was appointed in 1993, St George's was threatened with closure. An Ofsted report that year said "urgent action" was needed to address "the significant level of underachievement".

Mr Lawrence took a tough

Hague dodges debate over Lord Archer

BY ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

involved in campaigns within the party for mayor of London. It's up to the members and it's up to the candidates to decide whether they want to be candidates.

Mr Hague's replies were taken in some quarters as a calculated snub to Lord Archer, which they were not.

But the Llangollen exchanges illustrated the difficulty and potential embarrassment that would be created if Lord Archer did decide to throw his hat into the ring.

At that point, there is no doubt that allegations about Lord Archer's past would be referred to the party's newly created Ethics and Integrity Committee, set up, in Mr Hague's own words, "so that at last the reputation of our party can be protected from those who damage it through misconduct and dishonesty".

The party could then become impaled on the same kind of difficulty the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee has faced - how can a body which is not a court of law judge allegations of "misconduct and dishonesty" without an open process of prosecution and cross-examination, and full appeal?

مكذا من الأصل

When tipping is an issue of high ethics

I WOULD NOT, I decided, leave it until the end of the meal to work out the tip. Tipping is in the news this week because the Low Pay Commission has recommended that, when it comes to the new minimum wage, tips should be included in the calculation as to what makes up the minimum £3.60 an hour. So at dinner on Thursday I resolved to think about it early on.

Indeed, I went further and enlisted a bit of assistance by inviting a moral philosopher and an economist to eat with me.

At one of London's currently modish restaurants — Villandry — minimalist decor and French provincial food sprinkled with fashionable touches of Japan and Italy — I therefore arrived with Professor Len Shackleton, head of the Business School at Westminster University, and the theologian Julie Clague, currently at Jesus College, Cambridge, who teaches ethics at St Mary's University College.

We began with first principles. Why do we tip at all? I asked as we scrutinised the menu. But the others had opening questions too. How does the tipping system exactly work? asked the economist. Do the waiters, the people who actually render the service, actually get the money? asked the theologian in what she described as a "hermeneutic of suspicion".

Now facts are a dangerous basis for any discussion in either ethics or economics, let alone in a dialogue between a

Tipping is an anachronism, a relic of the master-servant relationship.

practitioner of each. But I took the risk, as we tucked into our starters of revealing the results of a quick telephone survey I had conducted in which I quizzed a range of restaurants on their tipping practices.

Statistics showed, I announced, that they were now fairly evenly divided between those who imposed an "optional" service charge (12.5 per cent is the norm) and those who left it for the customer to decide. In most the tips do go to the staff, though in a few the kitchen staff get a share, and in some the management take a cut.

Tips that are paid in cash tend to be shared on the day. But the vast majority are added on to credit card slips, and are generally paid through the staff's pay packets and are therefore subject to tax and national insurance.

Some restaurants pay low wages (£12.50 for an eight-hour shift was the meanest I encountered, with tips taking it up to £30 or £35). Others pay as much as £7 an hour as an incentive to get staff to stay with the firm; but then the full tip does not always go to the waiter.

"Tipping is largely about

PAUL VALLEY'S
BRITAIN

Villandry restaurant,
London

one-off encounters," began the economist. "Waiters, taxi drivers and, abroad, toilet attendants. We give to people who perform personal services."

"Tipping is an anachronism," said the theologian. "A relic of the master-servant relationship. It is also a form of moral blackmail."

"So you take a high moral stance on this," said the economist. Battle had commenced.

"No. I conform to social pressure. I don't want to be thought mean. But I think the practice will eventually die out."

The economist disagreed. "If it's a relic of class why is it so big in the US and Australia? It's an exchange to smooth social intercourse in situations where relations with strangers might embarrass."

The peppered skate and butter squash risotto arrived before the issue could be resolved. We turned to the minimum wage, on which the professor was due to give a paper the next day at a conference for the right-wing think-tank, the Institute of Economic Affairs.

I had invited Bharti Patel, the director of the Low Pay Unit, to join us too. Though she was unable to come she had offered a contribution to kick off the debate. It concerned cleaners and nursery nurses who get £1.50 an hour, and one employee at Burger King who effectively got 20p an hour because he had to clock off when he wasn't serving anyone. As Winston Churchill had once warned, we now ran the risk of the good employer being undercut by the bad, and the bad by the worse.

The United States, pointed out the theologian, had not been impeded by a minimum wage, which had been forced there since Roosevelt introduced it in 1938. "People here say it will destroy jobs, but they said that about equal pay for women and it didn't. In any case a minimum wage has a symbolic importance."

"Look," said the prof. "I don't want to be seen as the ogre here. There may be a case for a minimum wage. After all for a large chunk of history people thought it fitting to lay down laws about fair wages and just prices. It goes back to Babylonian days. It's in the Code of Hammurabi. All I'm saying is that it throws up practical problems and distortions which you have to deal with."

"Look," said the theologian, "work is a good. Meaningful employment is better than watching daytime television. But people need to be paid properly. Morality doesn't have to be naive. We do need to avoid economic distortions so it is not the fact of the minimum wage which is to be debated, but the level at which it's fixed."

The conversation seemed dangerously close to consensus. So, I asked, should we pay the tip in cash?

Cash, said the economist. Because it maximises the waiter's economic options.

Cash, said the theologian. Because, though in a fallen world it could encourage tax avoidance, cash would empower the staff and increase their moral choices.

But when the bill returned the credit card slip was pre-printed to include the service charge. We could ask for it to be redone, deleting the charge so we could tip in cash, I said, but that might be embarrassing.

Quite, said the theologian. Indeed, agreed the economist. Ethics were one thing, but embarrassment was quite another. So we paid, and smiled and left, in the approved English manner.



Tips for living at London's Basil Street hotel: should waiters rely on tips to earn a minimum wage?

Photograph: Philip Meech

MARKS & SPENCER STRAWBERRIES

The Cream of the Crop.



Prehistoric canoe found in quarry

BY DAVID KEYS

ONE OF the largest prehistoric dugout canoes found in Britain has been unearthed — but was broken up by quarry workers men before they realised what it was.

The vessel, 12-14 metres long, sunk with half a ton of freight of stone blocks in a flood surge 3,300 years ago. It is the first prehistoric boat to be found complete with its cargo.

At first workers at Shardlow, an gravel quarry in Derbyshire thought the boat was an old tree trunk and during quarrying work it was broken into three parts.

But later Roger Selby, an excavator driver, realised that it was no ordinary log but a dugout canoe.

Archaeologists were called in and a second piece was found. So far 11 metres of the

vessel have been recovered. The one missing piece, the stern, is thought to be between one and three metres long.

Experts say the boat would have been paddled or pointed. Its pointed bow was 25 per cent higher than the rest of the vessel, a feature reminiscent of dugout canoes in the Pacific and in North America.

Over the past few centuries some 200 dugout canoes have been found in Britain, but most were medieval. The vessel is now being worked on by archaeologists led by Dr Chris Salisbury and Daryl Garton of Nottingham University.

Work on the site has revealed the existence of a prehistoric settlement, which was probably on an island.

Russian church throws Tsar's burial into chaos

THOSE CLAMOURING for the re-burial of the remains of the last Tsar, Nicholas II, in the hope of closing a painful and divisive chapter in Russia's history face profound disappointment.

Just over a month before the bones of the Tsar and members of the imperial family are to be interred in St Petersburg, the ceremony shows no sign of offering a shred of - as psychologists put it - "closure" to this disorientated society.

By PHIL REEVES
in Moscow

shevok firing squad in Yekaterinburg.

The Russian Orthodox Church has ruled that neither Patriarch Alexy II, nor any bishop may attend the event. The Kremlin has indicated that, in the absence of the head of the Church, Boris Yeltsin is also unlikely to take part in the ceremony on 17 July, the 80th anniversary of the execution of the Tsar and his family by a Bol-

say less than \$2m will be spent on the event.

"What started as an attempt to find reconciliation has turned into another source of division," said Lawrence Uzzell, an expert on Russian Orthodoxy with the Keston Institute in Britain.

"It looks as if it is going to leave a sour taste in everybody's mouth. No one is going to be happy."

The church's decision is os-

tensibly because of doubts over the authenticity of the bones. Despite positive DNA tests carried out in Russia, Britain and the United States, some clergymen remain unconvinced.

They regard the issue as crucial, as the church is considering canonising the Tsar if he is granted sainthood - and Russian ecclesiastical opinion over this is also divided - the bones would become holy relics. A mistake would be disastrous.

"We would be venerating false relics," said one senior churchman, Metropolitan Yuvenal. "That would be a great sacrilege."

buried in St Petersburg means acknowledging their own relics are phoney.

The church will, however, play some role in the Tsar's re-burial. Bishops may be absent, but a priest will still officiate at the service in St Petersburg's Peter and Paul Cathedral. The synod has decided to hold fasts and prayers in churches across the country - though it has emphasised that this will be to mark the murder of the Ro-

manovs, not their re-burial. A statement will be read out to worshippers stressing the church's desire for accord.

This has not deterred Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow who lobbied for the bones to be buried in the Russian capital. A likely contender to succeed Mr Yeltsin, he has condemned St Petersburg's re-burial plans as "too meagre". "This ceremony will not be accepted by Russia," he declared this week.

Assault charge for Mr Violence

By DAVID USBORNE
in New York

QUENTIN TARANTINO, the master of movie violence, himself faces third-degree assault charges.

The director, whose triumphs, depending on your taste and squeamishness, include *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction* and who is currently starring in a Broadway thriller, *Wait Until Dark*, could face a year in prison if the charges are proved.

They stem from a fracas in a Manhattan restaurant in May. Angered by intrusions on his privacy, Mr Tarantino allegedly struck Leila Mwagui, 25, a fashion stylist, in the face with a punch meant for her photographer boyfriend, Barron Clairborne.

Mr Tarantino surrendered to police in New York's East Village on Thursday evening, after they announced that criminal charges were to be filed. He then left the police station for his regular performance on Broadway.

Ms Mwagui has already filed for civil damages. Her suit, filed in the Manhattan Supreme Court, seeks \$5m (£3m) in compensatory damages and \$10m in punitive damages. Those are tidy sums, given that the most she apparently suffered was a cut forehead.

A lawyer for Mr Tarantino, Paul Callan, was predictably scornful of the criminal charges. He suggested that they were being pursued by the stylist to buttress her civil case.

"This is celebrity stalking of the worst possible kind," he said.

For Mr Tarantino, the charges only add insult to a fair-injurious sojourn in Manhattan. His performance alongside Marisa Tomei in *Wait Until Dark* was panned by theatre critics.



Demonstrators at a rally in Lagos protesting against Nigeria's new military ruler General Abdu Salam Abubakar. Police used teargas to disperse the group. Reuters

Iron fist still rules in Lagos

PRO-DEMOCRACY activists

called for an end to military rule

in demonstrations in Lagos

yesterday, but troops firing into

the air and riot police unleashing

tear gas sent a clear signal

to the opponents of General Abdu

sulam Abubakar, Nigeria's new

military boss: Muscle still

rules in Nigeria.

Faced with his first major

test Gen Abubakar responded

with enough force to quell any

hopes of a meaningful anti-

government demonstration.

Police arrested Gani Fawehini,

a lawyer and leading dis-

ident activist who organised the

protests. They also arrested

Dupe Abiola, one of the wives

of the imprisoned business-

man Moshood Abiola, the pre-

BY FRANK MARTINS
in Lagos

samed winner of cancelled 1993

elections.

Mr Fawehini, arriving at the scene of one protest, was lifted on to the shoulders of his supporters, but police were so

enraged when the crowd began to cheer that Fawehini was then arrested along with the man carrying him.

Pro-democracy activists in

Africa's most populous nation

had promised a day of action to

protest against the new military

regime, installed last Tuesday

following the sudden death of

Gen Abubakar's predecessor,

General Sani Abacha.

On the anniversary of pres-

idential elections annulled by

the army five years ago, they

called for the release of politi-

cal prisoners, focusing on Chief

Abiola, who was detained in

1994 on treason charges for de-

claring himself the victor.

"The only acceptable option

for the military is the imme-

diate termination of military rule,

installation of a government of

national unity to be headed by

Chief Abiola and the convoca-

tion of a sovereign national

conference," said a spokesman

for the Civil Liberties Organi-

sation (CLO), one of a plough-

of-south-western groups

opposed to military rule.

The armed forces had

seized anxious. Schools and

universities were closed in sev-

eral parts of the country. Gen-

eral Muhammad Marwa, the

military administrator of Lagos

state, formerly the seat of gov-

ernment but much margin-

alised by General Abacha and

the main centre of resistance to

his rule, had appealed for calm

and patience. His police chief,

Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, was

more direct. "Anyone who en-

gages in any public act capable

of breaking the law will be se-

riously dealt with," he warned.

For the most part Lagos

was quiet, with many workers

choosing to protest by staying

away from work. "I want

democracy but I don't want

trouble," said one street vendor.

"Maybe we should give this

new guy a chance." At another

small rally in the northern town

of Kaduna, protesters carried

banners that read, "No fuel, no

water, no work, no medicine,

military must go now." The

demonstration was reported

to have passed off peacefully.

Gen Abubakar has still es-

tablished his position four days

after finding himself the com-

promise choice of a divided

military. "The next days are

crucial" said a western diplo-

mat in the capital Abuja. "at the

moment things could still go ei-

ther way." Amidst a swirl of

speculation in diplomatic cir-

cles, Defence Headquarters

took the extraordinary step of

issuing a statement denying

that anything untoward was

taking place. "The rumour that

some people are under arrest

and there is insurrection in

Abuja is a lie pedalled by a few

disgruntled elements to cause

problems for the new adminis-

tration," said army spokesman,

Colonel Godwin Ugbio.

In a brief address to the na-

tion earlier this week, the new

head of state committed himself

to General Abacha's pro-

gramme to restore civilian gov-

ernment, but did not say

whether this would happen by

1 October, as planned. He said

nothing about the fate of more

than 100 political prisoners, fu-

elling speculation about the

continuing strength and influ-

ence within government of those

officers loyal to General

Abacha.

Caesium 137 is used in some

industrial processes and in

hospitals. One theory is that a

batch of it might have been ac-

cidentally dumped into an in-

cinerator. Another possibility,

given the direction of the wind,

is an unclued accident

aboard a ship in the Medi-

terranean.

To put the pollution in per-

spective, Swiss authorities said

it was 10,000 times less dense

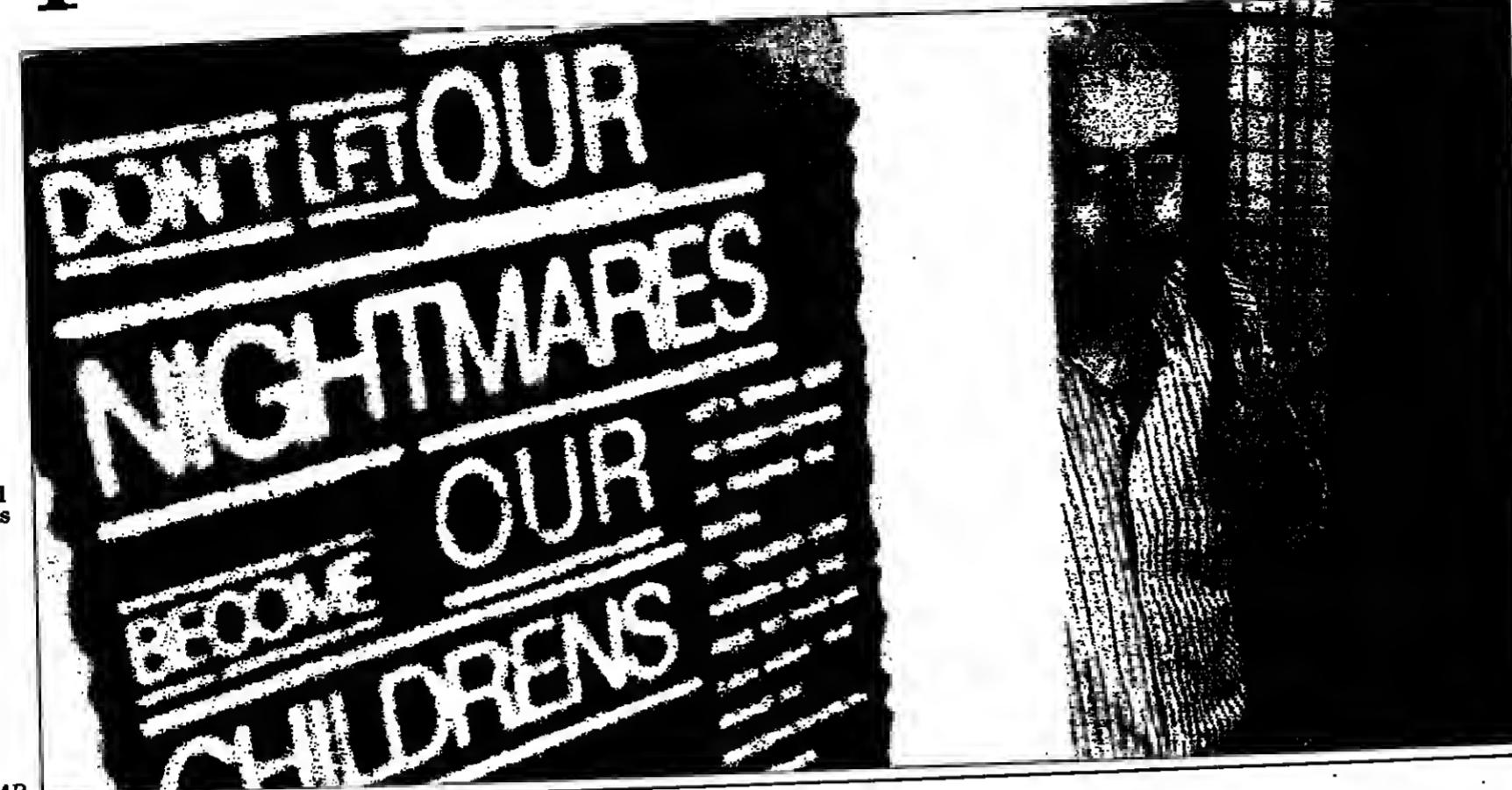
than the contamination from the

Chernobyl nuclear acci-

dent in 1986. French nuclear

SA planned chemical war on blacks

Wouter Basson, the former head of South Africa's biological and chemical weapons programme, codenamed Project Jota, arriving at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings yesterday



AP

BY RAYMOND WHITAKER
in Johannesburg

SOME TIME in the late 1980s, in a cottage south of London, a South African scientist called Jan Lourens met a British contact he knew only as "Trevor" to hand over vials of a deadly poison.

Mr Lourens had a company called Protechnik, which began by making protective clothing to withstand chemical attacks, but at the behest of the apartheid regime's undercover forces, branched out into gadgetry that included umbrellas with poisoned tips, soap boxes packed with explosives and a walking stick that could fire poisonous pellets. He was never told what they were for, but he was told there was no illusion that it was to assassinate the enemies of white rule.

Mr Lourens had a company called Protechnik, which began by making protective clothing to withstand chemical attacks, but at the behest of the apartheid regime's undercover forces, branched out into gadgetry that included umbrellas with poisoned tips, soap boxes packed with explosives and a walking stick that could fire poisonous pellets. He was never told what they were for, but he was told there was no illusion that it was to assassinate the enemies of white rule.

The former head of police forensics in South Africa, Loubar Neethling, told the commission yesterday that Mr Basson was briefed to produce riot-control equipment containing mood-altering drugs, and was therefore supplied with 200,000 mandrax tablets as well as significant quantities of LSD and marijuana. The TRC's legal officer, Hanif Vally, put it to Mr Neethling that the purpose of the research on drugs was to create widespread addiction among blacks, asking: "What better crowd control than to have an enslaved youth?"

The scientist said the research was "for the good of society", to find non-lethal methods of crowd control.

Other scientists have testified how Mr Basson swept aside their doubts about the work they were doing - work which included producing chocolates laced with botulism, cigarettes infected with anthrax and whisky mixed with weedkiller. One said he had been asked to investigate claims that a scientist in Europe had discovered a bacterium which hindered fertility among blacks, but inquiries had been dropped for fear that it was a trap set by foreign intelligence agencies.

Frank Chikane, a cleric and now a close adviser to President Nelson Mandela, survived after his underpants were laced with paraoxane, because he flew to the US and quickly received hospital treatment. But, in another case, when government agents poisoned the shirt of an exiled activist, a friend who borrowed the shirt died. Scientists also worked on infecting food with anthrax and beer with thallium, a poison which can cause mental retardation. It was claimed three Russians advising the ANC in exile had their food laced with anthrax spores, and one died.

Schalk van Rensburg, a former director of a company called Roodeplaat Research Laboratories, which produced more than 500 items for Project Jota, said his superior, Andre Immelman, told him of plans to give Mr Mandela thallium. "The intention, I understood, was to reduce his level of intellectuality and effectiveness by inducing brain damage," said Mr van Rensburg.

The suggestion was that it would be convenient if the future president, who was about to be released after 26 years in prison, did not last long, or at least appeared to have lost some of his mental capacity. There is no suggestion that the plot was ever carried out, but Mr van Rensburg said he had been told that the black consciousness leader Steve Biko had been given thallium before he died in police custody in 1977.

Guns fall silent on the Horn of Africa

THE GUNS fell silent in the conflict between Ethiopia and neighbouring Eritrea yesterday, while the two governments continued their salvos of blame for the clashes.

American and Rwandan diplomats were shuttling between the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa and the Eritrean capital Asmara to try to help resolve the conflict.

People fled the Ethiopian town of Adigrat after Eritrean helicopters and planes bombed the town on Thursday, killing four civilians and wounding 30. They hastily buried two victims of the raid before dawn so they could leave town. The other two were so disfigured they could not be identified. The wounded still filled beds lining the corridors of Adigrat's hospital,

where over 100 wounded soldiers are also being treated.

The Eritrean government said it had bombed the town because the Ethiopians had turned it into "the main garrison for reinforcing the invading Ethiopian army and a centre for army logistics".

But an Ethiopian spokesman in Addis Ababa the attack was "an act of desperation" after Eritrean forces were "heavily defeated" in ground fighting on two fronts on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian army poured reinforcements into the front lines south of Zala Ambessa, 10 days after Eritreans captured the town.

A commander in the area said he expected a fresh Eritrean offensive there.

DONALD MACINTYRE

Liz Symons' publicity has fostered the image of a Chanel-clad, politically weightless, New Labour princess. The reality is very different

SATURDAY REVIEW, PAGE 5

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هذا من الأصل

Imams strive to stay out of Kosovo's war

HIGH ABOVE the gently swaying linden tree, the MiG-29s daggered through the sky. The courtyard of the little white-washed mosque beside the Faculty of Islamic Studies echoed and crashed with the roar of the jets - you could see them, arrow-headed, flicking behind the leaves, suddenly black against the white summer clouds - but the clutch of Albanian Muslim students stood unmoved by their school notice.

Islamic medrassas have flourished in Kosovo - save for Tito's suppression in 1945 - since the 16th century; the Yugoslav Air Force's response to Nato's Albanian air manoeuvres was not going to interrupt their studies yesterday.

Yet this must be one of the few Muslim societies in the world that emphasises its lack of political ambition. As Jaber Hamiti, the faculty's general secretary, puts it: "The struggle for Kosovo is a national one and has its roots in history - it is not a religious war."

No call for *jihad* will ever come from the 15th-century Djamil Mathe mosque round the corner, no imam will ever call the Albanians of Pristina to turn against their Christian Orthodox neighbours. Or so we are told.

Hasamiti - dark-haired, with big friendly spectacles, perhaps no more than 25 - admits the Serbs themselves have already tried to turn this into a religious war. "They will soon talk about mujahedin," his taciturn colleague says. Wrong. The Serbs are already claiming to have captured 50 "holy warriors" of Islam in the fighting around Decani - an allegation they hastily abandoned when we asked for details.

Not that the religious authorities ignore the lessons of the war in Kosovo. Two years ago, their religious magazine *Ditaria Islamie* (Islamic Knowledge) carried front-page photo-

By ROBERT FISK
in Pristina

tographs of a starving Bosnian Muslim in a Serb concentration camp and an Albanian boy who had had the Serb cross carved on his bare chest with a knife. Recent issues have headlined the destruction of the homes of ethnic Albanians in western Kosovo. But Imam Sabri Bajgora, who is also a high-school teacher, insists Islam must not become part of Albanian politics.

"We are aware the Serbian regime is very close to the Orthodox church, though in a covert way," he says. "We saw this especially in Bosnia - when the Serb archbishop went to Bosnia and congratulated the Serb soldiers for what they had done there."

Imam Bajgora raises his voice as another MiG-29 arcs through the sky above the school courtyard. "Here in Kosovo, the church works together with the regime in saying that this is the Serb land. Yet in the past we Albanians have helped protect their churches, especially in the Decani area."

There is a firm belief on the part of Albanian Muslims that some Serb churches were built on the foundations of Albanian Orthodox ecclesiastical buildings, that Albanian Catholic families in Pec, Decani, Carabreg, Vranec, Ratko, Ljubenic ... "This war has national and political features - but no religious features at all," he says. "When our imam preaches at Friday prayers, he tells his followers that they should understand this is a war in which they must defend their families and homes and belongings - Albanian Catholic priests say

the same thing. The only difference is that the imam bases his words on the Koran, the priest on the Bible."

In one way, a conversation with Islamic officials in Kosovo parallels any meeting with a Serb. We go back into Slavic and Illyrian history, to the battle of Kosovo Field in 1389 - a glorious Serb defeat in the struggle against oppressive Islam, according to the Serbs; a Serb-Albanian Muslim coalition against the Ottoman Turks, according to the Albanians - and to the Second World War. Did the Italian occupiers not food Kosovo with Albanians, the Serbs ask? Did Albanians not fight for freedom against fascism, the Albanians ask? Here the Albanians are on weaker ground; Kosovo was not exactly a centre of Partisan recruitment against the Nazis.

Even the statistics are disputed. Do Albanians constitute 90 per cent of the population of Kosovo, or 92 per cent? Of these, are Muslims 88 per cent of all Albanians - with a mere 2 per cent Albanian Catholics - or less?

Of the 18 professors of Islam at the Pristina college, 10 were trained in the Arab world, mostly at the Al-Azhar university in Cairo, but others in Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Libya. Yet Mr Hamiti says they have never sought - or received - financial or other help from the Arab Muslim world. "We are independent," he says.

In Kosovo's provincial capital, no mosque has been built since the Second World War. Elez Osman, editor of the *Ditaria Islamie* magazine, says Albanian Muslims have been disappointed by the failure of the Orthodox church to raise its voice against massacres in Bosnia and Kosovo. "The head of their church has been one of the triggers of the war," he says coldly. "He lavished praise on the Serb 'warriors' who are now labelled war criminals by

the international community."

"As for us, it remains a national issue. Of course, when there is a crisis like this one, people more and more pray to God; when you lose hope, you become more religious."

Another jet cuts through the sky. Our conversation slips back into history again, to the Congress of Berlin.

"The Serbs made big pro-

paganda there and called us Arnauts [paid Turkish recruits]"

- and to the League of Prizren, when "Albanianism" was born amid calls for autonomy within the Ottoman empire. "If you could look through the archives of the Serb secret police here, you would find thousands of Albanians sentenced for political crimes," Mr Osman says. "They were not imprisoned be-

cause they were Muslims, but because they wanted liberty. And it will be achieved."

Outside, the courtyard is filled with the smell of linden blossom and the sound of fighter bombers. The frailty of nature against the power of technology. And yes, it would be pleasant to believe that Imam Bajgora, Jaber Hamiti and Elez Osman could maintain their

secular politics in the face of this increasingly brutal war. Iran, Palestine, Afghanistan, Egypt and Algeria all suggest otherwise. Just round the corner, I stop outside a beautiful mosque with a decorated wooden porch. "This is our opportunity," the imam is telling the men kneeling before him in Albanian. Then he reads from the Koran.

Milosevic under pressure

THE LEADING world powers last night issued a four-point list of demands to Slobodan Milosevic for an end to the bloody crisis in Kosovo, only for Russia to break ranks by opposing any use of force by Nato to end the Serb offensive.

Three days before a trip by the Yugoslav President to Moscow, Russia also refused to join a ban imposed by the other five members of the contact group - Britain, the US, France, Italy and Germany - on flights by Yugoslav airlines to and from their countries.

The Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, yesterday described as "potentially decisive" the talks he and President Boris Yeltsin will hold with Mr Milosevic next week. But he reiterated Russia's long-standing hostility to Nato airstrikes or any other military intervention.

The demands made by foreign ministers of the contact group, chaired by Robin Cook, are: An end to repressive action by Serb forces against the civilian Albanian population and the withdrawal of these units; impeded access for international monitors and observers; measures to help up to 50,000 displaced people to return home; and "rapid progress" in talks with the Kosovo Albanian leadership.

At the same time, Nato warned the Kosovo Liberation Army not to seek to take advantage of any Nato intervention if they continued to operate once this had started. Nato would cease all military operations forthwith.

The key to events now lies largely in Moscow and the meeting between Presidents Yeltsin and Milosevic. There are two uncertainties: whether the Russians will present yesterday's contact group demands as forcefully as the other members would like; and, even more fundamentally - over the extent of the influence which Russia has over events in Yugoslavia. On past form, Mr Milosevic will indulge in cat-and-mouse brinkmanship with the West until the last.

RUPERT CORNWELL

Prayers at a mosque in Pristina, where Muslim leaders are struggling to keep the war a secular affair
Marleen Daniels/Gamma

the international community."

"As for us, it remains a national issue. Of course, when there is a crisis like this one, people more and more pray to God; when you lose hope, you become more religious."

Another jet cuts through the sky. Our conversation slips back into history again, to the Congress of Berlin.

"The Serbs made big pro-

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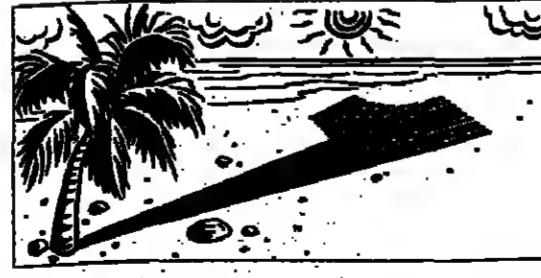
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Nuclear foes hit by loans freeze

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

AS INDIA and Pakistan edged towards a resumption of peace talks, leading world powers yesterday announced a freeze on all non-humanitarian loans to the two countries in protest at their recent nuclear tests.

The freeze will be largely symbolic given the existing *de facto* halt to all IMF and World Bank lending, and India's finance minister, Yashwant Sinha, declared it would have no immediate effect. But for the Group of Eight industrial powers, which announced the move at a meeting in London yesterday, it is another signal of their determination to stop the accelerating nuclear arms race on the Subcontinent.

That campaign, launched with the swinging US sanctions against India and Pakistan, has already notched up a small success with the announcement by both Delhi and Islamabad of test moratoria, after the combined 11 blasts conducted since mid-May.

Yesterday brought new hope of dialogue, as Pakistan offered to resume talks on 20 June, and

India countered with the date of 22 June. The jockeying itself is a measure of just how intractable is their dispute. But the G-8 foreign ministers professed encouragement that international pressure seemed to be yielding results.

The hard part is yet to come - somehow persuading the two south Asian rivals not only to return to the international fold by signing up the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty and the nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty, but to turn the latest feelers for talks into a real dialogue to reduce tensions.

A G-8 statement last night demanded that both countries cease threatening military movements and cross-border violations, and prevent terrorist activity, above all around the disputed territory of Kashmir, which the Pakistani foreign minister this week warned could ignite a nuclear conflict.

Japan offered itself as a neutral site for peace talks, if the two sides so wished.



Pauline Hanson, One Nation party leader, is picked up by one of her growing number of fans, pig and dairy farmer John Potter, in northern Queensland

Reuters

Hanson revives outback racism

BY ROBERT MILLIKEN
in Sydney

QUEENSLAND, Australia's "deep north", goes to the polls today in an election that has shaken the rest of Australia, thanks to the surging popularity of Pauline Hanson, a fringe politician who stands for racial policies that discriminate against the country's non-white minorities.

Australia thought it had got rid of the notorious "White Australia" policy. But Mrs Hanson, who comes from the Queensland town of Ipswich, wants to bring it back. She wants to close the door to Asian immigrants and to starve Aborigines out of public welfare spending. Up to 40 per cent of people in Queensland agree with her.

That is the level of support that Mrs Hanson and her party, One Nation, commanded yesterday in opinion polls in some Queensland constituencies, where farmers cheer her over her promises to abolish gun controls and to erect tariff barriers against their foreign competitors. When she swept through north Queensland on a whistle-stop tour of farming towns on Thursday, John Potter, a burly pig and dairy farmer, picked up Mrs Hanson in his arms as his mates gathered around. "My aim is just to give the Aussies a fair go again," she told them.

To Mrs Hanson, aged 44, the Aussie does not necessarily include Asian-born people, who comprise 5 per cent of the population, or indigenous Aborigines, who make up less than 1 per cent. Both groups have been the target of her invective since she was elected to the federal parliament in Canberra as an independent MP in 1996. In her maiden speech, she said Asian immigrants, were "swamping" Australia, and attacked welfare spending on Aborigines and the 1993 law which recognised Aborigines' rights to "native title" over traditional lands. Last week she declared native title was "a precursor to the establishment of a number of taxpayer-funded Aboriginal states".

Mrs Hanson founded One Nation last year in Ipswich. The party disintegrated as a result of internal bickering and by late last year, Australians thought they had heard the last of her. The campaign for the state election in Queensland showed how wrong they were.

Opinion polls yesterday gave One Nation 18 per cent support across Queensland, and between 30 and 40 per cent in some rural constituencies. Mrs Hanson's formula is a mixture of simple-minded economics and racial bigotry. She promises to set up a rural bank to make loans to farmers at 2 per cent interest and pay for these and other schemes by abolishing

the **Tell the**

boycott

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هذا من الأصل

strike leader
Husam Khader,
member of the
Palestinian Leg-
islative Council,
on the roof of
his house in the
Balata refugee
camp on the
edge of the
West Bank city
of Nablus

Bryan
McBurney



هذا من الأصل

A thorn in the side of Palestine's 'mafia'

A WEEK IN THE LIFE
HUSAM KHADER IN NABLUS,
PALESTINE

HUSAM KHADER, a political militant from Balata refugee camp on the outskirts of the West Bank town of Nablus, is jubilant because he has just organised a successful strike. Arrested 23 times by Israel during the Palestinian Intifada, he is now leading 20,000 people from Balata against the local representatives of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr Khader, 36, a lively man with a quick smile, modest but confident, does not like the rulers of this Palestinian enclave, surrounded by Israeli-controlled territory.

"They are a mafia," he says. "They want to use the present situation to get rich. They hear only the symphony of dollars." A member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Mr Khader explains that the strike was sparked off by the decision of Ghassan Shaka, mayor of Nablus, to double the price of electricity and water for the impoverished refugees in Balata. Mr Khader sees that as a symbol of the greed and corruption of the officials of the Palestinian Authority.

His two small daughters rush in and out of his office at the entrance to Balata as he outlines the events of the week leading up to the strike. Other Palestinian politicians mutter about corruption in Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority. But few do anything about it. Mr Khader is also different from other critics in that he has clear popular support. People in Balata obviously think he can help.

The local municipal authority does not cut much ice in the camp. "We haven't allowed them to cut anybody's electricity for nine months," he says. "They even came to my office, but I sent a message to the mayor, saying: 'Don't you dare!'" Mr Khader details the events that led up to the strike: "On Monday, he holds a meeting of 'the Committee for the Defence of Palestinian Refugees Rights'. We heard a senior official of the Palestinian Authority was coming to Balata to open a water project on Saturday. We decided to hold a strike and demonstration to call the loss of their homes in what is now Israel.

The people of Balata, a half-square kilometre of ramshackle concrete houses separated by narrow alleys, come originally from 60 villages and towns between Jaffa and Lod. After 1948 they were not allowed to return.

Husam asks his four-year-old daughter Amira where she comes from. She says: "I live in Balata, but I come from Jaffa."

A middle-aged woman in a pink dress comes to see him. She shows her refugee identity card, which has the names of 12 family members on it. Her husband has died and somehow she is no longer on the right list to get support from UNWRA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency). Husam makes a phone call to the local UNWRA director to explain her problem.

Husam Khader goes to the mosque in Balata on Friday and addresses 1,000 people, calling on them to support the strike. Given that half the 6,000 people who could work in the camp are unemployed, the strike will most obviously affect the shopkeepers.

He is somewhat contemptuous of people in Nablus itself, who are also badly hit by the high price of electricity and water, but do nothing. "There are no men in Nablus," he says. Then he looks embarrassed and softens the phrase.

At 10am on Saturday he goes to the market place with other committee members. The shopkeepers say they are waiting to close at 11am, as instructed by the strike committee. When the hour comes the strike is total.

The visiting dignitaries are met by a large demonstration. Mr Khader is pleased. "Would anybody deny water and electricity to people as poor as this, unless they were at war with them?" he asks.

The price rises remain in place. Now he plans to cut the main road to Jerusalem.

PATRICK COCKBURN

FEARGAL KEANE

If I were a soccer team I would be lucky to be in the fourth division. If I were a country, I would be Albania or Guineau Bissau

SATURDAY REVIEW, PAGE 3

Business & City Editor, Jeremy Warner
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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Powerscreen lists disposals

ONE OF Northern Ireland's leading listed companies, Powerscreen International, yesterday announced a £50m disposal programme in an attempt to clear the slate after two profit warnings and the announcement of an inquiry by the Serious Fraud Office had put the firm's future in doubt. The SFO was involved after a report by KPMG had discovered overstated earnings and other irregularities at its Matbro aggregates business.

The planned disposals will be mainly in the materials handling business, leaving the group to concentrate on screening and crushing of rock, and will substantially clear outstanding debts, the company said yesterday.

Managers who were alleged to have been aware of problems at Matbro as long ago as the middle of 1997 had now left the company. The shares rallied 30p to 100.5p but analysts warned that the delayed results for the year to 31 March are still likely to show a substantial loss.

The company warned at the time of the SFO enquiry that it faced losses of £10m in the year to 31 March. Last month a second warning forecast losses would be around £65m, including £20m attributable to earlier years.

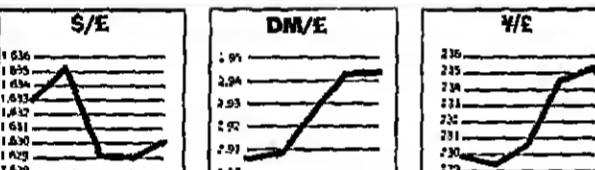
Osborne & Little rake it in

OSBORNE & LITTLE, the wallpaper and fabric designer, announced a £1.2m special dividend yesterday worth 20p per share. The pay-out, made from a £4.2m cash pile, is in addition to the standard annual dividend of 25p per share. Founders Sir Peter Osborne and Anthony Little will be the main beneficiaries as they control 40 per cent of the company between them. Osborne & Little saw full year profits rise 9 per cent to £5.3m last year.

Watchdogs warn on warranties

TEENS OF thousands of World Cup fans who have succumbed to this month's football mania and bought state-of-the-art television sets and videos, may have been bamboozled into paying hundreds of pounds for poor-value breakdown warranties for them. Consumer groups warn that such warranties are often far more expensive than protection available directly from manufacturers. Your Money section, Page 1.

STOCK MARKETS



INDICES

	Close	Change	Chg %	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield %
FTSE 100	5769.80	-82.70	-1.41	6150.50	4382.80	4.03
FTSE 250	5861.20	-55.80	-0.94	5970.90	4384.20	3.02
FTSE 350	2821.10	-37.70	-1.32	2940.10	2141.80	3.82
FTSE All Share	2761.31	-35.33	-1.26	2872.04	2106.59	3.78
FTSE SmallCap	2756.00	-11.40	-0.41	2793.80	2182.10	2.95
FTSE Flotline	1502.70	-8.80	-0.58	1517.10	1225.20	2.98
FTSE AIM	1133.80	-4.00	-0.35	1146.90	965.90	1.09
FTSE BEL10	1019.97	-26.91	-2.57			
Dow Jones	8731.80	-78.72	-0.89	9261.91	6971.32	1.63
Nikkei	1902.33	3.29	0.06	20910.79	14483.21	1.01
Hang Seng	7915.44	29.37	0.37	16820.31	7673.25	5.22
Dax	5670.83	-83.63	-1.45	5787.70	3487.24	1.18

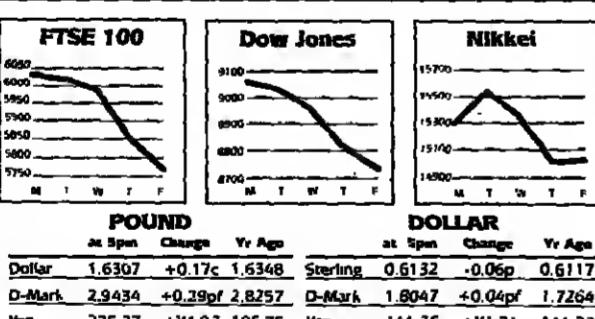
INTEREST RATES



MONEY MARKET RATES

	3 month	1 yr	Change	1 yr chg %	10 year	1 yr chg	10 year chg %
UK	7.69	9.96	7.71	0.58	5.62	-1.42	5.29
US	5.69	-0.13	5.81	-0.38	5.42	-1.00	5.83
Japan	0.55	-0.05	0.59	-0.29	1.52	-1.16	2.00
Germany	3.57	0.43	3.91	0.64	4.77	-0.84	5.34

CURRENCIES



OTHER INDICATORS

	Close	Chg	Vr Ago	Index	Close	Chg	Vr Ago	Index
Brent Oil (\$)	11.56	-0.04	16.99	GDP	114.70	2.90	111.47	100
Gold (\$)	285.95	-1.30	341.55	Sterling	61.632	-0.06	61.617	100
Silver (\$)	5.17	-0.74	4.74	D-Mark	1.8047	-0.04	1.7964	100
Yen	235.27	+41.93	186.75	Yen	144.38	+1.21	144.32	100
S Index	104.80	0.00	99.60	S Index	113.30	0.00	102.40	100

TOURIST RATES

	Australia (\$)	Canada (\$)	Denmark (krone)	Finland (marka)	France (francs)	Germany (marks)	Greece (drachma)	Hong Kong (\$)	Ireland (pounds)	India (rupees)	Italy (lira)	Japan (yen)	Malaysia (ringgit)	Malta (lira)
Median (new peso)	2.6609	5.92	5.92	8.7489	7.71	2.3319	466.51	12.25	1.1329	82.89	282.88	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Netherlands (guilder)	20.10	59.12	59.12	285.95	59.12	3.1095	59.12	5.92	5.92	285.95	59.12	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
New Zealand (\$)	59.12	59.12	59.12	285.95	59.12	3.1095	59.12	5.92	5.92	285.95	59.12	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Norway (krone)	12.16	29.06	29.06	285.95	29.06	3.2081	29.06	12.16	12.16	285.95	29.06	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Portugal (escudos)	290.61	290.61	290.61	285.95	290.61	3.2081	290.61	290.61	290.61	285.95	290.61	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9388	5.9388	5.9388	285.95	5.9388	3.2081	5.9388	5.9388	5.9388	285.95	5.9388	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Singapore (\$)	2.7084	2.7084	2.7084	285.95	2.7084	3.2081	2.7084	2.7084	2.7084	285.95	2.7084	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Spain (pesetas)	242.46	242.46	242.46	285.95	242.46	3.2081	242.46	242.46	242.46	285.95	242.46	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
South Africa (rand)	8.2393	8.2393	8.2393	285.95	8.2393	3.2081	8.2393	8.2393	8.2393	285.95	8.2393	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Sweden (krone)	12.76	12.76	12.76	285.95	12.76	3.2081	12.76	12.76	12.76	285.95	12.76	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Thailand (bahts)	53.25	53.25	53.25	285.95	53.25	3.2081	53.25	53.25	53.25	285.95	53.25	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
Turkey (lira)	410301	410301	410301	285.95	410301	3.2081	410301	410301	410301	285.95	410301	230.18	6.1890	0.6213
USA (\$)	1.9520	1.9520	1.9520	285.95	1.9520	3.2081	1.9520	1.9520	1.9520	285.95	1.9520	230.18	6.1890	0.6213

Rates for indication purposes only

Source: Bloomberg

Tory MP calls for block on MacKenzie's radio bid

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

CHRIS SMITH, the culture secretary, will next week come under pressure to block the proposed takeover of commercial broadcaster Talk Radio by the former Sun editor Kelvin MacKenzie on the grounds that it would strengthen Rupert Murdoch's hold on the British media.

The senior Conservative backbencher MP Nicholas Winterton has written to Mr Smith arguing that the bid, which is being backed by Mr Murdoch's UK holding company, News International, is "contrary to the national interest".

He has been joined by Baroness Wharton, a cross-bench peer, who has written to Mr Smith telling him that it would be "quite wrong" to allow Mr Murdoch, who already controls four national newspapers and holds a large share in British Sky Broadcasting, to extend his domination into the radio sector.

Mr Winterton intends to raise the issue with Mr Smith and Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, in the House of Commons on Tuesday.

He has tabled questions which ask whether the Department of Trade and Industry has any plans to prevent the further expansion into British

broadcasting by News International, and whether the competition authorities could intervene in the bid.

Mr Winterton also intends to ask Mr Smith what steps he is taking to promote "plurality and diversity of ownership within the UK media industries".

Earlier this week Mr MacKenzie resigned as the deputy chief executive of Mirror Group to lead a bid for Talk. He is being supported by News International, which under current media ownership rules is allowed to take a 20 per cent stake in the broadcaster. He has also secured the backing of Media Ventures In-

ternational, the investment group which has a 35 per cent stake in the station.

Mr Murdoch is believed to have wanted to lure Mr MacKenzie from The Mirror, where he had begun to stabilise the troubled tabloid's circulation and threaten the pre-emptive position of the Sun.

However, Talk's managing director, Paul Robinson, is leading a management team planning to

Learning to sell the family silver

I WAS amused to see the headline in this newspaper and others concerning the cause of privatisation. Roughly paraphrased they read "Brown to sell remaining family silver". This is a reference to Harold Macmillan's famous speech in the mid-1960s as the Earl of Stockton in which he criticised Margaret Thatcher's pioneering privatisation programme as tantamount to selling the family silver. The Tory grandee characterised the process as like some tragic tale of aristocratic decline. First the fine French period furniture disappears from the drawing room, then the Canaletto's go, and finally the family silver.

Lord Stockton's punishment for such a politically incorrect utterance was to have his portrait summarily removed from the walls of Number 10 Downing Street. I've no idea whether it has since been reinstated but given that Downing Street's new inhabitants seem as wedded to the idea of privatisation as Mrs Thatcher and Nigel Lawson ever at their most gung-ho, perhaps not.

The point about the latest clearout, however, is that such choice assets as the Newport Pagnell motorway service station, Belfast port, a further tranche of student loans, and the remaining government debt



JEREMY
WARNER

Downing Street's new inhabitants seem as wedded to the idea of privatisation as Thatcher and Lawson

in British Energy, can hardly be described as family silver. That's all long since gone. To extend Lord Stockton's analogy even further, first the fine French furniture, then the Canaletto's, then the family silver and now the battered old pewter mugs.

Somewhere along the line the great government clearout shifted out of the

sales room and into car boot sale territory.

To be fair, some of the assets on Mr Brown's hit list aren't too bad. The Royal Mint and the Post Office should find plenty of takers, as should the National Air Traffic Services, despite the fiasco of its inoperable new computer system. The last two of these would appear to be prime candidates for "securitisation", the process by which value is multiplied in the hands of the vendor by using a company's secure income stream to support the sale of high yield, junk bonds.

And if a Government which still quaintly prefers to call privatisation "private partnership" finds the idea of junk bonds beyond the pale, ministers shouldn't forget the recent National Audit Office report, which criticised the last government and its advisers for failing to spot that this way of privatising the train leasing companies would have yielded a great deal more for the Exchequer than the more traditional route used.

Even so, the Government has had to dredge the bottom of the barrel to find anything remotely saleable, as well as perform a nifty U-turn on its traditional opposition to privatisation of air traffic control. The Government is hoping to raise £4bn annually for the next three years from priva-

tisations to help fund its spending plans – or £12bn in total. The assets earmarked should just about meet this target. However, once privatised, has been accepted as a legitimate way to fund spending, the public finances tend to come to rely on it. Mr Brown's 24bn a year is a level of proceeds not so far removed from what the previous government used to raise by this method. When the last of the pewter mugs is sold, what's he going to do for an encore?

Actually there are still some quite big businesses which, curiously, continue to languish in state ownership. These are the sacred cows which even the previous Government had difficulty in touching, notably the Post Office, Channel 4 and the BBC.

The last of these will presumably for ever remain sacrosanct, certainly as long as Labour is in power. But a Government that can reverse its policy on air traffic control would presumably have little difficulty coming to terms with flogging off the other two. Fast forward to the other side of the next election, and whoever is then in power, it seems likely these companies will be on the menu. Privatisation is just too tempting a way of squaring the circle between the demands of the spending departments and the demands of the markets for strict financial prudence in the

public finances for them long to be off it.

There was a lot of talk from the Chancellor about prudence in delivering his spending review this week. So much so that it made you suspect he protests too much. If the Chancellor goes on and on about how prudent he is, it must mean he thinks we'll think he's not being prudent, must it not? Quite a few people, particularly in the City, took precisely that view. And to some extent they were right to smell a rat. Alone in the press, the Financial Times drew attention to a clever little slight of hand which I have to confess I failed to notice when reading the documents.

The Chancellor would have us believe that growth in public spending is to be limited to 2.25 per cent a year in real terms for the next three years, which as he rightly pointed out, would be in line with Treasury forecasts for the growth in the economy. However, the Chancellor also promised to double the amount spent on capital projects, which is apparently a separate and distinct category of Government spending. If you thought that hit of extra spending formed a part of the 2.25 per cent headline increase, as I did, you would be wrong. In fact it is additional spending which takes the total annualised increase to 2.75 per cent, considerably more than

anyone expected and certainly well above Treasury forecasts for growth.

But we should perhaps not be too harsh on the Chancellor. His predecessors promised real cuts in public spending and comprehensively failed to achieve them. Mr Brown's is a kinder message; affordable increases. Provided the economy behaves as the Treasury forecasts, then it is indeed possible to have these increases and start paying down the national debt at the same time. But if the economy moves back into recession then all bets are off, as they always are in such circumstances.

Even so, to have expected the Chancellor to make the public finances recession-proof too would have been prudent too far. And because to do so would have implied a freeze on spending increases, then the consequences might themselves have been recessionary. In any case, it seems to me the Chancellor has the balance about right. The public finances are in a far healthier state than anything demanded by the Maastricht treaty and it would be Scrooge in the extreme to deny public spending a little of that cream, particularly if Mr Brown is as good as his word and the extra spending goes on priority projects in education, health and transport.

BA to create 3,500 jobs at Gatwick

BRITISH AIRWAYS is to create 3,500 jobs at Gatwick as part of a plan to expand its passenger and cargo operations from the airport over the next decade.

The number of BA passengers at Gatwick is scheduled to rise from 7.6 million to 12 million a year, while cargo volumes are expected to double to 400,000 tonnes a year.

BA said, however, that most of the increase would be catered for by using larger jets rather than through a massive fleet expansion. The airline said the number of aircraft in operation at Gatwick would grow by 10 to 80 in the next decade.

The expansion will see a number of new routes added to BA's network as well as increased frequency on existing services. There will be more flights on Latin American routes this summer and eight new routes to destinations in eastern and central Europe, the Caribbean and the Middle East.

The extra jobs being created are part of BA's wider programme to increase its workforce by 7,500 to 70,000 over the next three years. Fifteen thousand extra staff are being taken on in areas such as customer service, cabin crew,

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

flight deck and telesales. At the same time, about 7,500 jobs are being cut in operations ranging from ground-handling and engineering to check-in facilities.

BA has increased its capacity at Gatwick by 20 per cent in each of the past three years. In the past decade it has increased its staff at Gatwick five-fold to 10,000, tripled passenger numbers – including those flown on franchise airlines – and invested £150m in fleet modernisation. This year, older DC10s and Boeing 747-200 jets will be replaced with the latest Boeing 777s and 747-400s.

The expansion at Gatwick has been achieved by transferring a significant number of routes from the overcrowded Gatwick to the alliance's new airline, BA Europe. It comes as BA waits to hear whether its long-delayed alliance with American Airlines will finally be cleared to go ahead. The European Competition Commissioner, Karel Van Miert, is expected to announce formal conditions later this month for allowing the alliance to proceed.

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12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Y/M	P/E	Code	12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Y/M	P/E	Code	12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Y/M	P/E	Code	
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE -1.622%																											
944 405 Allstar Beverage	891.4	4.4	42	824	160	190	210	210	210	748	700	102	850	0.0	4.2	12.8	700	500 164	164	164	850	850	0.0	4.2	12.8	700	
520 255 Amstel Lager	367.0	0.3	52	101	125	151	161	161	161	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 165	165	165	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
151 210 Amstel Lager	357.0	0.2	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 166	166	166	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
775 244 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 167	167	167	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 168	168	168	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 169	169	169	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 170	170	170	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 171	171	171	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 172	172	172	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 173	173	173	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 174	174	174	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 175	175	175	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
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255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 184	184	184	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 185	185	185	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 186	186	186	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 187	187	187	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 188	188	188	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 189	189	189	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 190	190	190	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5	420	350 191	191	191	420	420	0.0	4.5	12.5	420
255 255 Amstel Lager	747.0	0.5	51	81	95	108	115	115	115	412	380	420	420	350	0.0	4.5	12.5										

SPORT

هذا من الأصل

Battle for the box amid domestic disasters

LIKE A forward brought down in the act of shooting, my son beat his hands on the carpet in his frustration. On the television screen a character called, as far as I could tell, Mr Watermelon was doing something that water-melons do. Which was fine, in itself. The only difficulty involved had to do with the time, 4.40pm – 10 minutes into the 1998 World Cup finals.

The next time the World Cup gets underway and my son wants to watch Mr Watermelon, or Walter Melon, or whatever he calls himself, I will make arrangements. On this occasion, sadly, no appropriate measures had been taken, no agenda agreed. Result: a difference of opinion.

The start of the World Cup finals still excites me in the childish way



MIKE
ROWBOTTOM

many other sporting occasions now fail to do. That morning had been one like Christmas Days of old, when almost my first waking thought had been: "Today. Something special about today. Ah, yes."

So to find myself having to put the tournament's case to an enraged five-year-old came as something of a let-down. And the question could not be ignored: Why, when it came down to it, was the World Cup more important than Walter Melon?

Mentally, I rehearsed a number of arguments: "Because, son, this is the biggest sporting contest the world has ever seen... yes, bigger than a whale... yes, of course, you can have something bigger than a whale. A whale is a creature, but the World Cup... no, it isn't a fish. It's a mammal, isn't it? Remember? Right. So..."

Perhaps this, then: "Billions of people all over the world are watching... it's a million million... No, it's bigger than a million, because it's a million times a million. That means

a million lots of a million... anyway..." In the end, it came down to something simpler: "Because I want to watch it."

This argument failed to convince my son.

Fortunately, however, there was another line of approach – one involving the little portable television set living upstairs. That, however, involved a fresh round of negotiations with one of my daughters, who was using the screen for a computer game.

No more than a quarter of an hour

later, after a wide-ranging discussion on the topics of children's rights, natural justice and why it was important to be nice to your little brother, the whole thing was set up. Children upstairs under an uneasy truce. Dad downstairs, with the second half

and perhaps even a soupçon of the first ahead of him.

It was a disappointment to learn that I had missed the first goal of the 1998 World Cup. The commentary made oblique reference to the "schoolboy error" which had led to Brazil's opener, and my mind ranged over all the classic Scottish gaffes down the years. Perhaps it had been a goalkeeping error from poor Jim Leighton – Wembley 1990 revisited? Or maybe a rocketing own goal off the fair head of hapless Colin Hendry?

Setting myself down on the patch of carpet that had been so thoroughly pounded a little earlier, I began to get into the rhythm of the game. So this was it. For real. And Scotland were having a good go...

The shriek from the kitchen was

loud and prolonged. Some shrieks you hear and think "that sounds serious". Other shrieks you find you are moving towards before a thought goes through your head. This was in the latter category. I found my wife standing over what looked for a ghastly moment as if it might be a blood-bath – but turned out, on closer inspection, to be merely paint. Merely thick, crimson oil paint all over the new sink, maple edged units and grouted cream tiles as a result of some impromptu creative experimentation from our eldest daughter.

White spirit. White spirit. Or maybe that stuff for hands. No. White spirit. But where was it?

There was a roar from the television. I caught the name of Gallacher.

No kitchen roll. No kitchen roll. Toilet paper? Not strong enough. I raced next door to beg...

By the time I returned, the scene had been transformed from the Battle of Gettysburg to A Little Local Difficulty. The instant calculations of replacement costs – a grand, two – had been premature. It looked as though the kitchen was going to make it through to the second round.

So, one all. As I suspected, Kevin Gallacher had earned a penalty and someone had equalised. Still. Most of the second half...

Midway through the half the phone went, and I answered it. As I replaced the receiver I heard another television furor and returned to a screech of cavoring men in yellow shirts...

Hiddink's orange men opt for peace

The 'Bergkamp generation' are the men who may today put the Dutch on course for glory. By John Lichfield in Versailles

THE FIRST question anyone wanted to ask the Dutch was: "Are you fighting among yourselves yet?" The second question was: "Will Dennis Bergkamp be fit to play against Belgium tonight?"

The answers were, respectively, "no" and "yes and no."

"Yes and no" on the Bergkamp question, because the Arsenal striker's hamstring is now "medically fit" but the rest of his body is not yet strong enough for a full game. He may come on during the second half of tonight's match at the Stade de France – the unofficial championship of the Benelux, and potentially the most attractive single game in the first phase of the World Cup.

On the other question – the infighting question – there is ominous news from the squad's luxurious quarters beside the Chateau de Versailles. Peace has broken out among the Dutch.

Appropriately, the Netherlands team held its first press conference in the gilded room at the Trianon Palace Hotel in which the final peace terms for the Treaty of Versailles were presented in May 1919, formally ending the Great War.

In almost every international competition since the Dutch became a football force in the 1970s, the skilful but quarrelsome men in the orange shirts have blown up their own chances of success. Not this time, said the team's coach, Guus Hiddink.

In the past, Holland has had very talented generations – the

Cruyff generation, the Van Basten generation," said Hiddink. "They all failed to succeed in the final goal, for various reasons. That's why in 1996, I laid down a new framework of disciplines, responsibilities and values. The players are totally aware of those values. We are a good, tight squad of 22, prepared to go as far as we can go."

What Hiddink did not say was that the new "values" (starting with no open challenges to the authority of the manager) were laid down after a typically disappointing and fractious Dutch performance under his command at Euro 96. He also failed to account convincingly for the presence in France of not one but three "assistant coaches" – all experienced former Dutch internationals.

Some say that the trio – Johan Neeskens, Frank Rijkaard and

Ronald Koeman – are Hiddink's "enforcers". They are on the trip to stop the barrack-room lawyers in the squad from whispering that Hiddink, an undistinguished player who never won a cap, lacks the authority to be national coach. Others in the Dutch media suggest that the trio are there because the country's football authorities have the same doubt as some of the players.

No matter. The mood in the squad seems relaxed and determined. They come to the Belgium match, the key game in Group E, after a sparkling run in pre-World Cup friendlies: 2-0 against the USA; 3-2 against Mexico; 5-1 against Paraguay. The word from the eight

players offered to the press yesterday followed a single script: "This time, we are all playing on the same side."

More specifically, Bergkamp said: "We succeeded at Arsenal last year because there was a very good attitude in the dressing-room, right through the season. It's the same in the Dutch team now."

Can the "Bergkamp generation" succeed where the previous generations failed? Much depends on the fitness of the great man himself. "I couldn't play a full game now," he said. "But I could come on, if I am needed, after half-time. If all goes well, I should be completely ready for the next game in a week's time

against South Korea in Marseilles on 20 June."

The Dutch squad is packed with skilled and powerful defenders and midfielders – the De Boer brothers (Ronald and Frank), Jaap Stam, Wim Jonk, Clarence Seedorf, Aron Winter, Edgar Davids, Marc Overmars. Other than Bergkamp, it has only one central striker of undoubtedly international class, the young and enigmatic Patrick Kluivert, who had a poor season at Milan. To go all the way to the last four, or even the final (they are many people's dark horses) the Netherlands need a fit Bergkamp.

The manager hinted strongly yesterday that he would be used

against Belgium tonight only in dire emergency. "I must be 100 per cent certain that he does not risk another heavy injury," Hiddink said.

Judging by the size of the media clusters around individual players yesterday, the 1998 Dutch vintage may go down as not just the Bergkamp Generation but also the Stam Generation.

Jaap Stam, the world's most expensive defender, after his £10m transfer from PSV Eindhoven to Manchester United was agreed last month, seemed pleased with all the attention. After all, when he went to England for Euro 96 he did not get a game. Stam, 25, is a brutal-looking figure – tall, skin-headed and

roman-nosed – but a charming, soft-spoken man. No, it would make no difference to him that Alex Ferguson would be in the crowd tonight. He knows he will be under pressure anyway.

"Everyone will be pointing to me and saying 'that's the expensive one' and hoping I make a mistake. But pressure is good. I will soon settle down."

This has not been a happy World Cup for defenders. Does blame the new rules outlawing tackles from behind?

"It's bound to be on your mind when you're off the field. You don't want to be the first one to do something stupid. But as soon as you go

on the field, you have to remember the rule but also forget it. If it is raining, defenders hesitate, making them think about what they are doing. Then they can't afford that. You have to be free, you have to be yourself. You have to put it out of your mind, or you shouldn't be an international defender."

The Netherlands heavily defeated Belgium on two occasions in the qualifying competition. All Dutch squad members, from Hiddink down, are refusing to take that as a form guide for tonight's game.

The Belgian team has been re-built since then. Above all, Guus Hiddink said, they are "more of a team". So, it seems, are the Dutch.



Dennis Bergkamp (second left) is flanked by Netherlands team-mates Patrick Kluivert (left) and Edgar Davids in a display of footballing harmony

A1

Commentary of clichés, whinges and wines

STAN
HEY

VIEW FROM THE
ARMCHAIR



ing the expenses claims with renewed vigour.

But ITV's march into BBC territory is, as I predicted, underway as they begin to sift out the Sheringhams from their line-up in favour of the Owen's in search of the younger audience which their masters, the advertisers, covet so much. The dance-heat theme and strobing

lasers on the Eiffel Tower which form the opening credits to the World Cup broadcasts seem to be a direct appeal to the E-generation of viewers. When Bob Wilson appeared in Montpellier sporting a huge pair of earphones, I thought it was a joke at rival Gary Lineker's expense, but plainly it was an attempt to boost the market for Madonna headsets.

However, I suspect that Wilson is being eased towards the touchline in favour of the more relaxed and screen-friendly Jim Rosenthal, who has been seconded from ITV's Formula One coverage to be studio anchor in Paris. Wilson's usual wooden approach, which involves feeding the panelists a plonking line as a way to set up a video clip, has therefore been supplanted by Rosenthal's more confident, ad-libbing style.

But Bobby Robson has yet to adjust to this, judging by Thursday's just-to-end, two-man "Group of Death" in their own right. Motson's stink-attacks and Pleaf's tactical outbursts, conspired to make a disappointing game worse. The BBC may come to regret their recent tribute to Motson (The Full Motley) because the subject has failed to notice that it was an ironic piss-take rather than a ringing endorsement of his style.

Encouraged by this, Motson was in pure heaven with the exotic Cameron team. Nobody doubts Motson's sincerity or his expertise, but he's beginning to assert a malign influence on fellow commentators who seem to view his style as the route to success. Thus, ITV's Tyldesley offers almost a replica of the voice and those buttock-clenched crescendos, while the BBC's John Champion, comes pre-prepared with Motsonian sound-bites.

The new boy, Peter Drury, hired by ITV from BBC Radio 5, nevertheless made an auspicious debut yesterday afternoon which marked him out as a commentator of great potential. Calm, authoritative and keen to make sure that the basic business of identifying who is on the ball was achieved, Drury coped well with the first goalless game of the

competition, Paraguay against Bulgaria, and the first red card. He was also the first person on either team to hint at the reasons for the open style of the group games.

My theory seems to be that the previous system of drawing three teams from each group of four to go forward encouraged a cynical realisation that beating up on the weakest team and staging a couple of stale draws, was enough to qualify. But with only two teams advancing now, the need for two wins is imperative, hence the dog-eat-dog determination. Drury's appreciation of this underpinned his astute reading of the game. Less seriously, he was able to resist the temptation of a cheap George Michael joke at the Bulgarian Yankov's expense, thereby scuppering my 50-1 bet with Tote Credit.

Smart money going on Lonesome Dude

BY SUE MONTGOMERY

WHETHER or not York is, as those associated with the track tend to style it, the Ascot of the North, or Ascot is merely the York of the South depends on whether or not you were born in God's own country. But even the most fervent aficionados of the Knave's emir would acknowledge that today's card is not a canapé between the champagne of the Epsom Classics and next week's Royal feast.

It is, however, as the annual Timeform Charity Day, a taster with positive purpose. Over the past 27 years good causes have benefited by more than £25m, but that is still probably less than has been spent on hats over the same period at the other place.

With five handicaps available for perusal today – four of them televised – one of the day's certainties is that, despite munificent donations, the

bookmaking fraternity will not end up much out of pocket. The feature, the £50,000 William Hill Trophy, is one of its tried-and-tested earners, a six-furlong large-field cavalry charge.

The race, for three-year-olds, occasionally spotlights a

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Fayik
(York 3.10)
NB: Finistere
(York 2.10)

horse destined for better things. The excellent Roman Warrior won it 24 years ago; more recently Cadeaux Generoux (1988) and Sheikh Abdou (1991) used it as a stepping stone to champion status.

Prevalence (3.45), a big, strong son of Cadeaux Generoux, will be bidding to prove himself a chip off the old block in ability as well as looks. The chestnut landed a touch

over seven furlongs at Kempton two weekends ago and should be inconvenienced by neither today's shorter trip nor softer ground, and can give his

trainer, Jeremy Noseda, his best moment in Britain since he left the Godolphin operation. He has been favourite – backed from 7-1 to 5-1 – so to do in the sponsors' ante-post list this week, and those looking for a longer shot in a field of 23 could consider Atlantic Viking, who was outpaced on his seasonal debut in decent handicap company over the minimum trip at Epsom on Derby Day but should find today's conditions more to his liking, or Ruzen, like Prevalence on a hat-trick.

The man with the best numerical record at York in the past five years is Michael Stoute, who sends Lonesome Dude (3.10) for the Cadogan Silver Salver Handicap. The lightly raced but most progressive debutant in the two-year-old

short-head to spare on his last outing at Goodwood, but that was entirely because John Reid failed to spot Wudi Venture's challenge. Lonesome Dude got his jockey out of trouble with the minimum of fuss and should maintain his unbeaten record this season.

Wudi Venture (4.45) has declined to take him on again, opting instead for the later Daniel Penn Raced Stakes and can gain a deserved reward after three good second places this term.

Eastern Purple's eight-length romp last time out at Haydock may have attracted too much notice from the handicapper for him to repeat the performance in the day's big race, but his young stablemate Prince Dream (2.40) can put the experience he gained at Riper last month to good use by disposing of some fancied debutants in the two-year-old

contest.

William Hill have opened betting on Tuesday's St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot and make Victoria Note favourite of 9-4, followed by Leda A Hand (above) at 11-4, Desert Prince on 9-2, Fa-Eq on 5-1, Dr Fong on 9-1 and Almutawakil on 12-1.

YORK

HYPERION

2.10 Present Chance
2.40 Princely Dream (nb)
3.10 Dispil Diamond
3.45 RYFIELD (nap)

GONG: Good to soft (light in places).

STALLS: 51, 61 & 71 – stands side; round cource – inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE: Middle to low numbers should be best in the 2.10 & 3.45.

STAND: Under 100 yards from the start and ideal for a powerful gallop.

■ Ruzen: This is one mile south of city on A105. York railway station one mile away.

ADMISSION: County Stand £26 (16-21 year-olds £14); Tattersalls £22; OAPS £15.00. Under-16s free all admissions. CAR PARK £2 or free.

■ LEADING TRAINERS: M Stoute 26 wins from 125 runners (success rate 20.8%); H Cest 18 winners from 84 runners (22.6%); B Hills 16 from 78 (21.9%); C Cole 13 from 70 (18.6%); J Tizzard 10 from 62 (16.1%); J Toman 7 from 47 (14.9%); K Darley 17-11 (20.2%); M Hills 14-13 (10.9%); T Chant 15-12 (24.4%).

■ FAVOURITES: 75 wins in 514 races (14.9%).

LONG DISTANCE TRAVELLER: Piggy (3.10) has been sent 307 miles.

BLUNKER FIRST TIME: Tracot (3.10). Prevalence (Maced, 3.45), Karsel (mired, 4.5), The Game (mired, 5.15).

GOING: Good to soft (light in places).

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Royal fear for Fallon

KIEREN FALLOON will sit out this weekend's racing amid doubts that the champion jockey will be fit in time for Royal Ascot.

The earliest that Fallon will be back in action is Monday – the eve of the Royal meeting. He was due to see a specialist late yesterday.

Fallon gave up three rides at Newbury on Thursday after hurting his right knee when riding out for Henry Cecil's stable at Newmarket. He had been booked to partner top-weight Eastern Purple in today's William Hill Trophy at York but his place has been taken by Alan Culhane.

A spokeswoman for trainer Cecil said: "Kieren is going to see a specialist later this afternoon. He should know more later."

French Ballerina, a winner at the Cheltenham Festival in March, will take on the top Flat stayers in the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot on Thursday, it was confirmed yesterday.

Pat Flynn, her trainer, will run her in the Group One in preference to the Hardwicke Stakes the following day. The County Wexford trainer said: "I decided that she won't have any trouble with the trip so we'll go for the Gold Cup and I think she'll run a good race."

A winner of six of her 12 starts on the Flat, French Ballerina beat Gordi by a length and a half in the Listed Saval Beg Stakes at Leopardstown last time out.

Seamus Heffernan was in the saddle that day and will ride again on Thursday.

French Ballerina beat His Song in the Citroen Supreme Novices' Hurdle at Cheltenham

RESULTS

YORK
2.10: (6) novice stakes
1. SAPPHIRE K Darley 8-1
2. Dark Alibi Pat Eddery 8-11
3. Irish Crest J Fortune 20-1
Also ran: 9-4 Tidal Los Juras (4th).

4. 8-1, 9-1, 2-1, (W) (winner) P McCorquodale (by Col-
ope) C Booth (for Mervin Rogan)
Takes: £250.00 DF: £225.00 CSF: £100.00 NFT: Sun-
day Gr.

2.45: (4) handicaps

1. POLLY GOLIGHTLY C Ratte 8-1
2. Lags Off D McKeown 14-1
3. Barossa L Channon 11-1
4. Westcourt Magic L Channon 11-1

Also ran: 9-2, 10-2, (G) (winner) P McCorquodale (by Col-
ope) C Booth (for Mervin Rogan)
Takes: £250.00 DF: £225.00 CSF: £100.00 NFT: Sun-
day Gr.

3.05: (2) handicaps

1. CUGINA M O'Brien 4-1
2. Secret Ballot R Flanagan 11-1
3. Doublehand D Hartnett 10-1

Also ran: 4-1, 5-1 Sky Domes (6th), 5-1 Judicial
Supreme (7th), 6-1, 7-1, 8-1, 9-1, 10-1, 11-1, 12-1, 13-1, 14-1, 15-1, 16-1, 17-1, 18-1, 19-1, 20-1, 21-1, 22-1, 23-1, 24-1, 25-1, 26-1, 27-1, 28-1, 29-1, 30-1, 31-1, 32-1, 33-1, 34-1, 35-1, 36-1, 37-1, 38-1, 39-1, 40-1, 41-1, 42-1, 43-1, 44-1, 45-1, 46-1, 47-1, 48-1, 49-1, 50-1, 51-1, 52-1, 53-1, 54-1, 55-1, 56-1, 57-1, 58-1, 59-1, 60-1, 61-1, 62-1, 63-1, 64-1, 65-1, 66-1, 67-1, 68-1, 69-1, 70-1, 71-1, 72-1, 73-1, 74-1, 75-1, 76-1, 77-1, 78-1, 79-1, 80-1, 81-1, 82-1, 83-1, 84-1, 85-1, 86-1, 87-1, 88-1, 89-1, 90-1, 91-1, 92-1, 93-1, 94-1, 95-1, 96-1, 97-1, 98-1, 99-1, 100-1, 101-1, 102-1, 103-1, 104-1, 105-1, 106-1, 107-1, 108-1, 109-1, 110-1, 111-1, 112-1, 113-1, 114-1, 115-1, 116-1, 117-1, 118-1, 119-1, 120-1, 121-1, 122-1, 123-1, 124-1, 125-1, 126-1, 127-1, 128-1, 129-1, 130-1, 131-1, 132-1, 133-1, 134-1, 135-1, 136-1, 137-1, 138-1, 139-1, 140-1, 141-1, 142-1, 143-1, 144-1, 145-1, 146-1, 147-1, 148-1, 149-1, 150-1, 151-1, 152-1, 153-1, 154-1, 155-1, 156-1, 157-1, 158-1, 159-1, 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Henman's high follows Rusedski fall

TENNIS

By JOHN ROBERTS
at Queen's Club

IT WAS evidently going to be one of those curious days of lawn tennis the moment Pete Sampras, the four-times Wimbledon champion, succumbed in straight sets to Mark Woodforde, a 32-year-old Australian who had defeated in their 10 previous matches for the loss of only three sets.

What followed at the Stella Artois Championships proved to be bitter and sweet for the British game.

First Greg Rusedski, a genuine prospect for Wimbledon, which gets under way nine days hence, was taken to hospital after damaging his left ankle in a fall while playing Lawrence Tieleman, a Belgian-born Italian qualifier ranked No 253 in the world.

While Rusedski was being assisted from Court No 1 after retiring in the opening set, his British rival Tim Henman, on his way to defeating Goran Ivanisevic on the adjacent Centre Court, 6-1, 6-7, 6-4.

With the sun finally shining on a tournament drenched by rain on the opening four days, two rounds were scheduled in order to catch up, and spectators had been hoping to see Rusedski and Henman duel in the quarter-finals. Instead, their enthusiasm was tempered by Rusedski's misfortune.

Henman's win against Ivanisevic, a Wimbledon runner-up to Sampras and Andre Agassi, was pleasantly surprising. Although the 23-year-old from Oxford had beaten the big-serving Croat left-hander in their two previous matches, this was their first meeting on grass.

Ivanisevic, depending on his mood, is capable of beating anybody, particularly himself. Yesterday he sported a sumo-style hairdo, complete with a top-knot, but neglected to throw salt on the court to ward off the evil spirits that take control of his racket from time to time.

Henman, by contrast, was admirably unfazeable, saving three break points in the opening game and frustrating his opponent with superior play for the rest of the set. Crucially, Henman did not lose his nerve after Ivanisevic levelled the match by winning the second set-break, 7-5.

The Briton competed a morale-lifting victory by hitting a service which gave Ivanisevic scope to do little other than net a backhand volley on match point after an hour and 58 minutes.

Sampras's defeat means that the Chilean Marcelo Rios has an opportunity to supplant the American as world No 1 again on the opening day of Wimbledon. That will not trouble Sampras if he is able to restore his confidence by then.

"Pete has said at odd times during the year that his moti-

vation isn't quite what he would like it to be," Woodforde said after winning the third round match, 6-3, 6-2, after only 59 minutes. "Everybody is aware that, motivationwise, he isn't there, that there is a slight difference in him. You just look at his results. Every match he plays is as tight as nails.

"Perhaps his problem is more mental than physical. Here, for example, there's been a lot of rain and he's said he doesn't like soccer but has had to watch it because everybody else is. I'm not saying he played badly. I just played a very tight match against him, and he couldn't take his level up a notch or two. I'm not in his situation, so I don't know if I'd be panicking."

"I did go out with a plan, and executionwise it was on. If he didn't hit a near ace, I was able to get it back, and low enough (to trouble him). For me it's a nice scalp. I don't know if I believed 100 per cent that I could beat Pete Sampras, especially on grass. In all honesty, he's played some awesome matches against me, even when I thought I'd played well. I was just hoping he would let his guard down."

Sampras tried to be philosophical. "I'm disappointed," he said "but the main goal is Wimbledon."

■ Steffi Graf will meet Nathalie Tauziat in the semi-finals of the DFS Classic at Edgbaston today, after beating Magui Serna of Spain, 6-4, 6-4.



Pete Sampras, the world No 1, plays a forehand during his surprise straight sets defeat to Mark Woodforde

Goulding back in fold

RUGBY LEAGUE
By DAVE HADFIELD

BOBBIE GOULDING is set to return for St Helens in the match that could see London move into the top five for the first time this season.

Goulding, left out of Saints' 17 for the last two weeks, played half of a reserve game against Widnes on Thursday night and is one of their substitutes against the Broncos tomorrow evening. His coach, Shaun McRae, plans to use him at some stage of what is traditionally a tight fixture.

"Bobbie knows why he was left out of the team and I'm hoping he has now had his wake-up call," he said. "We know what a confident, switched-on Bobbie Goulding can do. When he plays well, everyone plays well. I've been very pleased with Sean Long and Tommy Martyn at half-back, but he was always going to come back and

put pressure on them for his place."

The match at Knowsley Road is a pivotal one for London as well, with a victory by 12 points or more taking them into the play-off zone despite the general perception that they are not yet fully on song.

They try a new half-back combination of Glen Air and Damien Chapman at Saints. The vast experience of Terry Matterson and Mark Carroll is available from the bench, but Martin Offiah and John Timu are still missing.

The Super League leaders, Leeds, try to take their winning start to the season into double figures at Hull, who have lost seven on the trot.

Leeds have Adrian Morley back after suspension. He replaces Anthony Farrell, who drops to the bench, alongside Jamie Mathilou, who comes in for the injured Marc Glanville.

An increasingly desperate

Hull have new injury problems with Jamie Smith and Simon Booth, but Graeme Hallas and Dean Busby could return.

Peter Edwards' run of 84 successive games as hooker for Salford comes to an end at Halifax, where the 19-year-old Malcolm Alker is preferred. Cliff Eccles is also dropped for the match against the third-placed surprise side of the moment.

A decision on planning permission for a shopping park and a stadium that would host a proposed Super League franchise is deferred by Swansea Council yesterday.

Rochdale have signed 18-year-old prop Danny Sculthorpe, brother of St Helens and Great Britain forward Paul, on a three-and-a-half-year contract after he was given a free transfer by Warrington. He joined the Wolves as make-weight in the £370,000 transfer that took Jason Harris to Leeds a year ago.

■ The Super League leaders,

Detroit set for sweep

ICE HOCKEY

KRIS DRAPERS goal for the Detroit Red Wings after 15min 24sec of overtime completed an inspired comeback as they beat the Washington Capitals 5-4 in the best-of-seven NHL championship series.

Draper's goal meant the defending Stanley Cup champions took a two-match lead. Victories in their five previous overtime contests had helped Washington reach the final for the first time in their franchise history, but the final ended finally.

The Red Wings captain, Steve Yzerman, had a superb game, scoring two goals, and he also put a thunderous check on the much larger Mark Tinordi on the back boards, forcing the Capitals defenceman to give the puck away. Doug Brown picked it up and shot high over Kolzig's left arm to tie the game at 4-4 with just 4min 1sec left in regulation time.

Yzerman very nearly had a hat-trick but Kolzig robbed him of the potential winner in the closing minutes of the third period. He also did a tremendous job of keeping Sergei Fedorov from putting the puck in the net more once.

After Yzerman scored the only goal of the first period, Washington erupted for three second-period strikes, with Peter Bondra, Chris Simon and Adam Oates each beating Chris Osgood for a 3-1 lead. With their sound defence, the Capitals appeared to be heading for series-leveling win.

Just 28 seconds after Yzerman struck, on the very same Capitals powerplay, Joe Jimenez netted his seventh goal of the play-offs to restore Washington's two-goal lead. But any idea of tight defensive play went out the window in the fast and furious end-to-end action over the rest of the game.

Just 63 seconds later, Detroit's Igor Larionov sent a behind-the-back pass to Lapointe, who beat Kolzig with a wrist shot for his eighth of the play-offs to make it a one-goal game with just over 11 minutes remaining in regulation.

The Detroit goalminder, Olaf Kolzig, finished with 65 saves but it was not enough to save his team from a painful defeat. "We put a lot of rubber on him tonight and he just kept making save after save, giving his team a chance to win," Draper said of Kolzig.

Game three takes place in Washington on Saturday and Detroit are still in a position to record their second consecutive Stanley Cup clean sweep.

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'If in doubt, get the ball out. Lash it upfield'

FOR YEARS Italian teams have been experts at putting defenders in the right penalty area positions to deal with the danger when crosses are swung over. I was thinking the other afternoon that this side were no different when they failed to defend a centre and gave Chile their equaliser. Then, lo and behold, Italy put themselves in danger of losing the game when Marcelo Salas, who is not the tallest striker around, got above his marker to head a second.

Chile's second goal was a calamity for the Italians because the move sprung from a failure to clear the ball out of defence. That has always been their way; the back players will try and pass the ball at every opportunity whereas I would prefer to see them lash it upfield. I always used to tell my defenders: 'If in doubt get it out'.

It was a shock to see Italy concede



JACK
CHARLTON

goals in that fashion and they were immensely fortunate to get back into the game through a diabolical penalty decision but write them off at your peril. They are notoriously bad starters, and don't forget that after Ireland defeated them in the opening group game in America four

years ago they went on to reach the final. Nor did Italy lose that game with Brazil. I don't consider it a defeat when you are beaten on penalties.

Watching both Brazil and Italy it was clear that neither have changed their approach from four years ago. Italy still play with a sweeper behind two markers; they give you room at the front but not at the back. They'll track back and place people behind the ball. They have done it no differently for the last 30 or 40 years.

The two front men for Chile, Salas and Ivan Zamorano, have come in for a lot of praise. Apart from the goals I never saw them in the game though their movement and running and the way the whole team got forward was exceptional at times. They came back well after losing an early goal but the Italians help you do that, they always seem

reluctant to look for the additional goals that will kill the game off.

The space Scotland discovered when they were able to get at Brazil, particularly in the second half, will have given hope to the other fancied sides in the tournament. The likes of Argentina, Germany and France will be thinking now that Brazil are maybe not the big threat they were anticipating.

It was such an unfortunate way for the Scots to lose that my heart went out to them and Craig Brown. You don't mind if Ronaldo has thumped one home from 20 yards or so but an own goal is a real stinker. Then again, had Brazil taken their chances as Brazilian teams normally do, the game would have been over before Tunny Boyd put through his own goal.

Ronaldo's finishing disappointed me. Several times he was in scoring

range and could only hit the goalkeeper or send the ball wide. What interested me about him was that he was making the same runs that we saw from Romario four years ago, coming deep to receive the ball and then either turning to run at defenders or laying off the ball, often to the guy who made the initial pass and who then set off into the spaces Ronaldo had just vacated.

Scotland gave themselves problems by allowing Ronaldo to turn instead of getting right up close to him. I've always thought that he is not the greatest at turning, but once he comes at you face on and has the chance to use his pace then he is a frightening proposition, as we saw with that mad run that took him past several challenges and on to a shot which Jim Leighton turned away.

Brazil look solid in defence, they

have big lads in there, good competitors, and they are pretty mobile. If I was their manager my worries would be over the goalkeeper. Cafu.

He never gave me feelings of confidence and he will need plenty of protection from those in front.

That's where the captain Dunga

is so important because while others are bombing forward he sits in the middle, closes the spaces and forces the counter-attackers to play down the flanks rather than through the middle. When I was with Ireland

I always told one of the centre-backs to step forward if we were

short in central midfield because it

is the one position you don't want to

leave yourself exposed.

Attackers know they can turn

without getting kicked and if they are

fouled near the box they will win either

a penalty or a free-kick while the

perpetrator runs the risk of a red

card. The front men have so much

more freedom these days. Imagine

what it must have been like before

to have a Norman Hunter or a Jack

Charlton breathing down your neck

as you went to receive the ball!

'By the time we play Tunisia, I will know the strengths and weaknesses of every player. We're very professional.'

Inspirational Adams fit and ready for fray

TONIGHT, like every night, Tony Adams will pause for a moment and consider how his day went. Was it a good one? Was it a bad one? Did he achieve anything?

"It might have been a depressing, hulking, horrible day, but, if it was, the important thing is that I acknowledge it," said Adams as he prepared for England's opening World Cup game against Tunisia on Monday. "I try to have good days. I want to do a good day in the office, that's where I get my self-worth from. But I'm a realist. You don't do everything good in a day; the thing is to acknowledge the mistakes and get on with the next day. I have fun today, I live my life, it's a great life."

It was not always like this. Adams is now almost two years into his well-documented fight against alcoholism and, so far, things are going well. But when he moves into the confessional mode, as he did when we spoke at England's Brittany training camp this week, it is evident that the fear remains, the fear of slipping back into the blackness.

Every so often this fear is given an edge by an unwanted reminder. Most recently it was the sight of Paul Gascoigne drinking his World Cup place away in La Manga. With the focus moving to the players who are in France, Adams was reluctant to discuss Gascoigne, but he repeated last week's pledge of a shoulder to lean on if Gascoigne wanted it.

"I'm there for Paul, he's a wonderful, happy, lovely, lovely soul. He's a beautiful man and there is a sadness in last week's events. But there are 22 professional players here trying to win the World Cup for England and talking about whether he should be playing is a derisive to the likes of David Beckham, Paul Scholes and so on. I wanted a fit, tal-

GLENN MOORE

ented Paul Gascoigne in the World Cup, but it was not to be and you have to accept the reality of it. He's gone."

Adams remains with England and his condition is an example to Gascoigne of what a change in lifestyle can achieve. Mentally and physically he has rarely, if ever, been in better shape.

"I'm true to myself today," he said.

"I've got rid of all the guilt. I can sit here and talk to you knowing you've got nothing on me. There are no ghosts in the cupboard. My physical condition is very good. The rest after the FA Cup final did me good. We

"Talking about whether Gazzetta should be playing is derisive to Beckham, Scholes and so on. I wanted a fit, talented Gazzetta to be here, but it wasn't to be"

ple as that. If you go and look at the tapes you'll see I was a bit better than that, a player who could play a bit. I was playing a particular way because the boss wanted me to and it was successful. My game might have been suffering but I was winning so I thought 'why should I change?'

"I've changed now, but everyone does as they get older. I'm more experienced and the new manager has been wonderful for me. But I still play to my strengths, I still defend first and foremost. This player who brings the ball out, beats three or four people and sets up the centre-forward with a pass, he is a media figure."

This ball-playing sweeper exists even more vividly in Glenn Hoddle's imagination and it is no secret that Adams does not agree with the England coach's defensive vision. In the absence of an English Matthias Sammer, Adams remains England's defensive heart and he is already preparing for the Tunisian game.

"I'm very excited, the World Cup is the top of the tree, but I'm keeping it in perspective. I'm not focusing beyond the first game. By the time we play them I will know the strengths and weaknesses of every player in their team. I won't build them up, but I will know how they are on their right foot, their left foot, how good they are in the air. We watch videos, we're very professional, but it's nothing new, we used to do the same with foreign clubs at Arsenal.

"I started at 17, I saw that Pat Rice kept a notebook on left-wingers. I wanted to learn, I wanted to be a professional footballer, so I went home and put it all down. All about Cyzile Regis, about Garry Thompson, the way he out-jumped me. It's knowledge, it's my job, I still do it."

worked very hard in La Manga then rested again. Now I'm strong."

His revival as a person has coincided with the emergence of the footballer Adams looked like he might become when he first broke into the England team. While he remains sceptical about his supposed transformation from braying centre-half into ball-playing libero, he accepts that, under Arsene Wenger, he is a far more rounded player than under George Graham.

"People say all I could do was head a ball; now I go forward and score beautiful goals. It's not as sim-

ple as that. If you go and look at the tapes you'll see I was a bit better than that, a player who could play a bit. I was playing a particular way because the boss wanted me to and it was successful. My game might have been suffering but I was winning so I thought 'why should I change?'

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Batistuta on route towards golden future

IN ONE respect at least you can see why Alex Ferguson sees Gabriel Batistuta as a replacement for Eric Cantona. Ask the Argentine a potentially tricky question and his understanding disappears. "I'm sorry," he says, shrugging his shoulders in a manner familiar to Manchester United of seasons past, "my English is not very good."

For two years now, rumours have circulated that Batistuta, 29, is Old Trafford bound, a testament to his fluency on the pitch. Make that the football equivalent of multi-lingual, because the man evades markers with the same facility he dodges questions.

Cantona was a playmaker-cum-striker. Batistuta does not worry about creation. Destruction is his thing, scoring goals at the rate of more than 20 a season in Italy's Serie A for Fiorentina. Add more than 40 for his country, Argentina, and you can see why claims about Alan Shearer's place at the apex of the world's strikers are greeted with some scepticism, even in parts of South America that do not pay homage to Ronaldinho.

Against the Republic of Ireland in April, it was clear that Batistuta had the word "friendly" foremost in his mind. He barely bothered to run, yet he scored a goal with a delicate touch at the near-post, hit the woodwork and was thwarted on another run only by Shay Given's brave save. A hat-trick would not have been out of the question by any means, something he achieved last month against Bosnia. Imagine what he might have done if he had been really trying.

If Batistuta plays, he normally scores, which puts Argentina in a privileged position compared to other leading sides - France spring immediately to mind - who have a wonderfully creative core but are not blessed with seasoned and natural strikers. The rider being, if Batistuta actually plays.

For nearly a year, Daniel Passarella, the national coach, dispensed with Batistuta's services, saying: "If he wants to play in the World Cup, he must learn the way

Recalled to the national side, Argentina's main striker is ready to use the platform to show his wares. By Guy Hodgson

my Argentina plays."

That involves one centre-forward with several others joining in support, seemingly a perfect role for Batistuta but one that only recently seems to have landed in his lap ahead of Parma's Hernan Crespo.

For months a great deal of posturing and posturing went on but, going into France '98, bridges have been rebuilt and coach and player are reading from the same script. A problem? "Absolutely not," Batistuta replied. "I'm not against the press, but those stories are not real. I can't say why I wasn't in the team for nine months. Perhaps the manager thought another striker was playing better than me."

I would like to move to England. There are various teams that interest me. In two or three years it is possible'

Passarella added: "Other players didn't play too, but because Batistuta is well known it was noticed. When he didn't play it was for tactical reasons, nothing more. There were rumours of a rift between us but that never existed. My relationship with him is exactly the same as with the other players."

Hamrin. Spend time with Batistuta and you hear what he hopes will be best received. To Argentina he says he wants to return to his South American cattle ranch when his contract with Fiorentina ends in June 2000; in Italy he wants to stay there. The British version? What you would expect, really.

"I would like to go to England but I don't know," he said. "There are various teams that interest me. In two or three years it is possible'

For nearly a year, Daniel Passarella, the national coach, dispensed with Batistuta's services, saying: "If he wants to play in the World Cup, he must learn the way

various teams that interest me, but the most important thing for me would be that they would allow me to fight for the championship. Manchester United, Liverpool or Arsenal, no problem, they are all very good. In two or three years, it is a possibility."

"Manchester United contacted me last year and it wasn't a question of money why I stayed. Fiorentina pay me well. It's simply that Fiorentina could not sell me. The reaction of the fans would have been too angry."

Bull is not exclusive to Batistuta's farming interests but within those sentences are many grains of truth. When Roberto Baggio was sold for £2m in the 1980s there were riots in Florence - something that would almost certainly be repeated if "Batigol" was transferred - and, at a reported £2m a year, he is second in Italy only to Ronaldo (£3m) in terms of wages.

Yet Batistuta has been frustrated by Fiorentina's repeated failure to win anything of substance and the lack of a suitable stage in Europe has irked him in the past. "I was happy for Ronaldo," he said after the Brazilian became World Player of the Year, "but I still don't know what the criteria is to win the award."

The World Cup provides him with a platform to set his own parameters and, despite repeated denials from Fiorentina that they would let him go, there is a suspicion that Batistuta will be performing not only for Argentina in France but also for his own future.

The stories linking him to Manchester United will only fade away if he goes elsewhere, probably to either of the Milan clubs. But if he does want to come to this country then the opportunity to show his wares could be upon him soon. If England qualify for the second phase, Argentina could be their opponents.



Gabriel Batistuta: 'Fiorentina couldn't sell me. The fans would have been too angry' Empics

Guivarc'h the latest French export

BY ANDREW MARTIN

FRANCE CONTINUED to yield up its talent to the world yesterday as Newcastle and Blackburn moved to secure the services of two of the World Cup host nation's footballing luminaries. Arsenal, too, are lining up a raid across the Channel.

The first player to travel to England this summer is expected to be Stéphane Guivarc'h. The 27-year-old Auxerre and France striker has agreed to join Newcastle for £3.5m.

He could be swiftly followed by countryman Sébastien Perez, the subject of a £2.5m offer from Blackburn Rovers. The Bastia defender has been over to Lancashire to visit Ewood Park and is understood to be keen to sign. Blackburn have already spent £7.25m for the Southampton striker Kevin Davies and signed the Newcastle defender Darren Peacock on a free transfer plus £500,000 on Gillingham's Jim Corbett.

Arsenal will pursue their interest in Thierry Henry, Monaco's French international right-winger once the host nation's participation in France '98 is over. But there is likely to be a snag to the deal which could involve the Double winners losing Nicolas Anelka to Barcelona.

When the Spanish champions bought the Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson from Monaco for £2m last year, they also took out an option to purchase Henry, a 20-year-old Parisian who broke into France's World Cup plans this year.

According to *L'Equipe*, Barcelona have informed Monaco that they will allow Henry to join Arsène Wenger's French colony at Highbury. However, the newspaper claims that they will waive their claim on the player only if Arsenal let them have Anelka, who did not make the national squad.

Southampton dipped into the fee they received for Davies yesterday to take Stuart Ripley from Blackburn for £1.5m. The 30-year-old had been linked with a return to his former club, Middlesbrough, but the Saints manager, Dave Jones, has emerged as the favourite to sign the winger, according to ClubCall.

The summer managerial carousels turned yesterday, with Bruce Rioch expected to step back on at Norwich. The former Bolton and Arsenal manager is poised to take over from Mike Walker, who parted company with the Carrow Road club at the end of April.

Collins cagey as move to Premiership beckons

BY BRYN PALMER

THE SCOTLAND midfielder John Collins yesterday insisted he will wait until after the World Cup before deciding which English Premiership club to join.

The 30-year-old midfielder has been linked with moves to both Middlesbrough and Liverpool after admitting he will leave Monaco after the finals.

Collins was impressive against Brazil in the tournament opener on Wednesday, when his penalty ultimately failed to prevent the Scots falling to a 2-1 defeat.

And as he prepares to face Norway on Tuesday in a match crucial to Scotland's hopes of qualifying for the second round, the former Celtic player will not be rushed into deciding where to continue his career.

He said: "I have got a year to go on my contract with Monaco but I feel now is a good time to come back and

play in England. There is nothing definite but I have got good options and I will make my decision after the World Cup. There is too much to concentrate on at the moment."

Collins believes it is now vital to beat Norway in Bordeaux on Tuesday if Craig Brown's side are to fulfil their dream of becoming the first Scottish side to make it past the group stages.

"Not getting anything out of

the first game means it is now

vital to get three points against

Norway," he said. "There is a lot

of confidence in the group that

we can qualify, although we

have got two tough games

ahead of us with Morocco to

come as well."

The need for Norway to gain

a victory is equally pressing if

Egil Olsen's side are also to

progress beyond the first round

for the first time. They will

meet Brazil in their final first-

round match, so earning max-

imum points against the Scots

may prove decisive. "Brazil will qualify from the group, and then it will be one from Norway, Scotland and Morocco," Olsen said.

"I'm sure it will be a very difficult game for us against the Scots. I heard they played very well against Brazil, so I know it won't be easy for us. It will be a tight game and potentially a decisive game. The winner can go through, but the loser will be eliminated."

Olsen is considering up to three changes - probably all in defence - to the team who drew with Morocco in Montpellier. "We couldn't cope with the fast attacks and the long balls from Morocco," he said.

"We need to work on our organisation in defence and I may make one, two or three changes. I don't know at this stage."

Norway have only one injury

problem, the defender Vegard Heggem, who pulled groin muscles during yesterday's

training session and is expected to be out of action for at least 48 hours.

Jamaica's Fitzroy Simpson is convinced the Reggae Boyz will show the world how good they are when they open their Group H campaign against Croatia in Lens tomorrow - that the West Indians are not merely present in France to make up the numbers.

The Portsmouth midfielder claims Jamaica are in a defiant mood and could well surprise any side that does not afford them the respect they deserve.

"We are here to try and make progress in the tournament," he said. "Of course, we are under no illusions. It will be a big test for us but if our opposition treat us too lightly then they will be in for a big surprise."

"There are some talented players in our squad and we are all confident about our ability as a team. We are optimistic about making progress."



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THE GLOBAL GAME

THE WORLD CUP AROUND THE WORLD

IT MAKES you smile to think back months ago, when everyone was sounding off on what the Azzurri team would be for the World Cup. When you think that we still don't know now, after the first match (Thursday's 2-2 draw with Chile), in which Maldini tried out, and not for fun, 14 players, and called for help from the unthought-of Chiesa, a player who should by now have been off at the seaside. When things go badly you have to improvise, but we still have the cardinal question hanging in the air: What is, what will be, the national team which will take us through the tournament? What shall we do, start again from the top?" *"Gazzetta dello Sport"*, Milan

"THERE WERE almost no chances in the first half [of Austria's 1-1 draw against Cameroon on Thursday]. Later the game did get better and more varied. But it undoubtedly remained the weakest of the four World Cup matches so far. Welti, who on the TV captions had the promising name "Welt" [World], did most of the attacking work, while Herzog looked as though he had taken his leaden walrus coat off at last... A triple change [three substitutions] was supposed to turn things around. A seemingly ludicrous enterprise for the eight remaining minutes. But, thanks to Pöster, the equaliser arrived just when time was running out." *"Kurier"*, Vienna

Compiled by Rupert Metcalf and Elizabeth Nash

IN FRANCE WITHOUT A TICKET

Nicholas Harling's daily quest to get into a World Cup match: Day Three

After the hair-raising 152-mile dash from Bordeaux the night before to take in the last hour of Austria v Cameroon in Toulouse, the journey to Montpellier was fractionally more sedate. There we found, as expected, that Bulgaria v Paraguay was the easiest and least expensive game to get into. The touts' prices dropped drastically as kick-off approached, and a friend purchased a 250 franc ticket for just 200fr; then I acquired a 145fr ticket for 150fr. No problem...

DUCATI EXPERIENCE

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Salas exposes the game's defensive frailties

A PHOTOGRAPH on the front page of yesterday's *International Herald Tribune* and several other publications showed Marcelo Salas climbing above Fabio Cannavaro to head Chile into the lead against Italy in *Bordeaux*.

At the time of its execution, 10 minutes into the second half, Salas's second goal prompted out only thoughts about the impact he looks likely to make in Europe following a move from River Plate to Lazio (worth £12m to him personally) but how far defensive standards appear to have fallen.

None of the coaches whose teams have already turned out in these finals will be happy with the work done in their own trenches. Certainly not the Italian coach, Cesare Maldini. A doleful figure at the best of times, he grew increasingly agitated



KEN JONES

at the Parc Lescure on Thursday with basic errors of application and judgement.

No matter how much the game of football evolves strategically, the fundamentals will always remain the same. Teams who can't cope with

simple aerial attacks aren't going anywhere.

This may be Italy's fate at France '98 unless Maldini can coax a more purposeful response from the guardians of Italy's goal area. To see them caught out of position and continually second best when attempting to out-jump Salas and Ivan Zamorano must have made Maldini feel older than his 56 years.

After the struggle to qualify that put his position in jeopardy, Maldini reverted to the old defensive *cateraccio* he helped to perfect as a leading player. This despite the knowledge that the best available choice as sweeper, Alessandro Costacurta of Milan, is not always alert to the responsibility.

However, it was not so much Costacurta's fallible reactions leading perhaps to a redeployment of

Maldini's son, Paolo, who was again outstanding at left-back) that will have worried Maldini as much as the woeful marking. Even allowing for Salas's courage and a spring reminiscent of Denis Law, defenders with a big advantage in height should at least have been on equal terms with him.

There was an early warning for Italy, and a thought provoking moment for Maldini, when Salas got behind Cannavaro and Alessandro Nesta to head just over. A problem or just a lapse in concentration? A problem it was, one that would cause an outbreak of paranoia in Italy's defence.

With the first half running into three minutes of injury time, Cesare Maldini had to think again about the advice he was about to impart in Italy's dressing room when Zamora

no again got the better of Nesta, heading down for Salas to bring Chile level.

Maldini could be imagined stressing the importance of attacking the ball from Chile's centres and maintaining defensive cover. Coaches can never be certain that their words have actually sunk in and, within five minutes of the re-start, Maldini must have been wondering about the ability of his central defenders to absorb simple tactical instructions.

Joining in an attack that developed in midfield, Pedro Reyes came forward to fire in a centre that Salas converted with his head after again getting in position to rise above the leaden-footed Cannavaro. On the touchline, Maldini held his head in despair and began to prime his substitutes.

So uncharacteristic of Italian football, the malaise is widespread, a manifestation perhaps of the nervousness caused in defenders by Fifa's ill-judged decision to load the dice in favour of attackers. Then again, it could be a view supported by a number of coaches I have recently conversed with that the fashion for more fluid systems of play is having a detrimental effect on the development of young defenders.

When the Leeds United manager, George Graham, referred last season to a general decline in defensive play, he wasn't thinking only about the Premiership. "I see it wherever I travel in the game," he said. "Unless there is a strong midfield screen in front of the defenders very few of them today look really comfortable. They have grown so used to being protected that a

crisis comes as a complete shock to them."

Earlier this week, Scotland opted for putting plenty of bodies between the ball and their goal, an understandable policy in view of Brazil's clear technical superiority. A problem with this is that attackers are prone to aberration when given defensive responsibility. The own goal that brought Brazil victory resulted from Gordon Durie's positional error when drawn back to provide his defence with much needed assistance. Lured to Denilson's cross from the left, he lost sight of the danger developing behind him.

These are early days but nobody should get carried away by the notion that risk-taking will become a feature of these finals. The game is played at both ends and there isn't a coach here who doesn't know it.

Nankov is tournament's first sending-off as Bulgaria fail to revive the spirit of '94

Chilavert forages in vain

By Peter Lansley
at Stade de la Mosson,
Montpellier

Bulgaria 0
Paraguay 0
Att: 27,650

THE BACKBONE of the Bulgarian team who claimed God must be a compatriot after beating Germany to reach the semi-finals of USA '94 were present in body, if not in spirit, yesterday as Fifa's new cleansing edict claimed its first victim.

In the first goalless draw of these World Cup finals, Anatoli Nankov became the earliest recipient of a red card for a tackle from behind in this competition, a decision which drew a stinging rebuke from the Bulgarian coach, Kristo Bonev.

Nankov, one of the few privileged younger players to be allowed into the side among Stoichkov, Ivanov and company, had already been cautioned for a 22th-minute foul on Jorge Campos when, with two minutes remaining, he slid in from behind to fell Juan Carlos Yegros.

The Saudi Arabian official, Abdul Al Zeid, had as little hesitation in plucking out his red card as Bonev did in saying afterwards: "Fifa will regret what they are doing with the new rule. It is going to make football soft."

"People come to the World Cup to watch a man's game, but what Fifa are doing will change all that. The people will not be happy. I thought the decision on my player was harsh. He is the first victim of the new rule."

The distraction of the dismissal could not mask the reality, however, that Bulgaria had let slip a total dominance of this game and they ended somewhat gratefully with a single point.

The sight of Paraguay's eccentric goalkeeping captain, Jose Luis Chilavert, rushing the full length of the field to take a 73rd-minute free-kick had seemed destined to complete Bulgaria's fall from grace.

Chilavert, beloved, if controversial, iconoclastic figure in South American football, is not in better shape when he forages forward to within sight of his opposite number's goal. The four goals he has scored for his country include one in the draw in Argentina that helped ensure qualification for France '98.

These past few days he has been witnessed staying behind after training, practising his dead-ball kicks. And 25 yards yesterday with all the finesse of David Beckham, his strike curled menacingly towards the top corner, requiring Zdravko Zdravkov to make the save of the game.

Yet Bulgaria started with the belief and swagger that suggested the advancing years would not hold them back from picking up where they left off in America; Euro '96 might, after all, have been just a blip.

Stoichkov, all shrugs and snarls, suddenly came alive when Roberto Acuña gifted him a sight of goal, but the former Barcelona striker's left-footed shot hit the post.

Stoichkov has relinquished the captain's armband to Trifon Ivanov



Lyuboslav Penev of Bulgaria (right) and Paraguay's Carlos Morales battle for the ball during yesterday's 0-0 draw. Reuters

who, despite wearing his hair shorter these days, retains that loveable "wolfman" image. When he started playing slowly back in preparation for a 40 yard free-kick strike shortly before half-time, Krassimir Balakov nipped in to play the ball short. Ivanov was furious. It is to be hoped Balakov, the stylist but temperamental Stuttgart midfielder, has his health insurance sorted.

In a group where Spain would appear to stand head and shoulders above the other teams, a winning start was crucial. If Miguel Benitez had shown more composure in front of goal in the second half, Paraguay would have achieved such a feat. Chilavert, typically dominant at the post-match press conference, said: "We played well and we should have won. But we weren't talented enough to take our chances."

In a group where Spain would ap-

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DIARY

THE 'ALLER et Retour' Gallimard Official Guide to France '98 has struggled for accuracy in its section devoted to Scotland. As if naming the injured Gary McAlister as the Scots' star man were not bad enough, the guide also lists Scotland's 'trainer' as Jock Brown, the Celtic general manager and brother of national coach Craig. Jock, ironically, is currently considering legal action over claims that he *interferes* in team affairs at Parkhead.

JAPAN, A nation often said to be obsessed with sex, has decided it has no place in the World Cup, imposing a ban on their players for the entire tournament... A leading Japanese magazine said the younger members of the party were passing around pornographic magazines to minimise the effects of the deprivation while the coach, Takeshi Okada, has set up a "relaxation room" equipped with video and computer games at the team's hotel.

THE BRITISH-themed sports bars in Paris and Toulouse, the Frog & Rosbif, is struggling to cope with demand from England supporters for their beer - *l'Inseine*, *Parislytic* and *Dark de Triomph* are three varieties - and with a pint downed on average every 15 seconds they can't brew enough. Meanwhile, the spectre of empty restaurants as diners stay at home to watch the football has persuaded six top French chefs to offer free meals in Rouen.

WORLD CUP football is far less damaging to your health than attending a rugby match or a rock concert, says the French organising committee's head doctor, Nicolas Garodetsky. "We had only a few matches but so

far everything has gone smoothly with relatively few fights and surprisingly few cases of alcoholism," he said. "Compared to open air rock concerts, we've had very few problems." Even with the thousands of Scottish fans pouring into the Stade de France for the opening game with Brazil, very few people were drunk. "Only one serious case has been reported - it's much worse for big rugby matches," Garodetsky added.

THE NIGERIAN team have been ordered by their country's new leader, Abdulsalami Abubakar, to shine in France so their compatriots don't become even more depressed about the death of his predecessor, General Sani Abacha. "The hopes of a nation rest on your shoulders in this difficult time," he told them.

AUTOGRAPH HUNTERS successful in obtaining Jamaican signatures are receiving religious messages as well. "God is with you" and "Jesus loves you" are some of the Christian wishes being written by the squad. Coach Reo Simoes said: "It's important the message our team gives to the world - believe in your dreams and God will be with you."

SAUSAGE SALES in Denmark increased by 25-30 per cent and the demand for crisps, soft drinks and beer matched it as the nation prepared to watch their opening game with Saudi Arabia. In Bulgaria the priority heading the shopping lists is a television set. "In the last two to three weeks people are buying TV sets like bread during a crisis," said a salesman.

TREVOR HAYLETT

QUOTES OF THE DAY

"I've got a Welsh dragon tattooed on my arm and it's been pretty difficult hiding it from the other South African boys." Paul Evans, goalkeeper added to the South African squad. He was born in South Africa but raised in Wales.

"It was wonderful. But I'm planning to score an even better one before the tournament ends." Cameroon's Pierre Njaka, after his extraordinary goal in the 1-1 draw against Austria.

"I think 3-1, 2-1 and 2-0. That is nine points." German chancellor Helmut Kohl, who visited his country's squad yesterday, on their prospects in the first round.

"The play wasn't encouraging. Let's hope for better." Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi after draw against Chile.

Clemente confident of strength in depth

By RUPERT METCALF

SPAIN'S COACH, Javier Clemente, and his team head into their opening World Cup game against Nigeria in Nantes today on the back of an astonishing record which has left them supremely confident.

But the Spaniards are perennial under-achievers, with a fourth-place finish in 1950 still their best performance in nine previous finals appearances, while they were quarter-finalists in 1986 and 1994.

There is a feeling in the Spanish camp, though, that this may be their year, despite the fact they have been drawn in a tough group

necessary for the good of the team. The current side have a winning mentality. They are born winners."

In Lyons this afternoon South Korea have their best chance to shed the World Cup finals' most unwanted record - 10 matches without a win - when they play their fellow outsiders, Mexico.

The Mexicans' confidence has been hit by a dismal warm-up programme and they face highly motivated opponents who are determined to win their first finals game ahead of the 2002 World Cup, which South Korea is co-hosting with Japan.

"This is our fourth successive World Cup but we have never won

a match, so for that reason the game against Mexico is a decisive one for us," said Cho Chung-yun, the general secretary of the South Korean Football Association.

Mexico's coach, Manuel Lapuente, is being guarded following a run of bad results that culminated last month in a 5-2 loss in Norway and a humiliating 4-1 defeat to a German club side, VfL Wolfsburg.

In today's other Group E fixture at the Stade de France, the Dutch, the scorers of 10 goals in their last two games, are up against a Belgian side thirsting for revenge after their humiliation in the World Cup qualifying competition.

Belgium were beaten twice in qualifiers by their neighbours, whose first-choice front line of Patrick Kluivert, Dennis Bergkamp, when fully fit, and Marc Overmars is probably the most potent at the finals.

A lot of Belgian pride is at stake but their coach, Georges Leekens, insists he is already looking past the Dutch game to Mexico a week later.

"I've always said 'Mexico, Mexico' ever since the World Cup draw," Leekens said. "If we beat Mexico and South Korea, we qualify for the second round. The rest is just a bonus."

For his part, the Dutch coach, Guus Hiddink, is having a hard time

convincing an ebullient public back home that his side are not certainties for the second round - and maybe a lot further. He was concerned by a draw 0-0 draw with Cameroon but after two 5-1 wins in subsequent friendlies, over Paraguay and Nigeria, he seems concerned that the mood may have swung too far the other way.

"The Belgians are much cleverer, much more cunning," he said - and he is probably right.

The Belgians are also a better side than the one the Dutch beat 3-0 and 3-1 in qualifying. Their defence is likely to be much tighter despite the absence of the man-mover



Gordan Vidovic through injury. Up front, the pairing of Fiorentina's Luc Nilis are fit and in form.

مكالمات من الأدلة

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO FRANCE '98

YESTERDAY'S MATCHES

Paraguay 0 Bulgaria 0

GROUP D: STADE DE LA MOSSON, MONTPELLIER. ATTENDANCE: 27,650

Goals: 0
Yellow cards: 1 (Benitez)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 6
Offsides: 0
Free-kicks (against): 15
Coach: Paulo Cesar Carpegiani

Goals: 0
Yellow cards: 3 (Nankov, Ivanov, Stoichkov)
Red cards: 1 (Nankov)
Corners: 9
Offsides: 1
Free-kicks (against): 22
Coach: Hristo Bonev

Running commentary

1 min: Balakov unleashes an ominous 25-yard volley, but to no avail.
3 min: Stoichkov appeals loudly but unsuccessfully for a penalty.
6 min: Iliev's break and subsequent solid low shot at goal begins long period of Bulgarian pressure.
13 min: Ivanov hits free-kick through wall. Chilavert stands on his line, for a change.
27 min: Nankov yellow card (for a foul on Campos).
35 min: Stoichkov hits the post. Ball deflects away.
40 min: Chilavert turns away purposeful, bending free-kick from Ivanov.
41 min: Bulgaria caught by rare counter-attack leaving Cardozo with clear shot, which he misses badly.
44 min: Yellow card Benitez (studs up on Ivanov).

45 min: Yellow card Stoichkov (felling Benitez).
50 min: Benitez finds space in front of goal. Ball bounces unkindly but Paraguay brighten.
61 min: Paraguay's goalkeeper, Chilavert, brings welcome fun, taking a characteristic 30-yard shot to start good attack.
64 min: Stoichkov cuts ball back cleverly. Penes wastes great chance.
71 min: Ivanov yellow card (foul on Campos).
72 min: Chilavert goes up to take superb, curling free-kick. Zdravkov gets fingers to ball, just.
80 min: Dangerman Benitez almost lifts ball over Zdravkov.
86 min: Zdravkov comes out to make crucial interception.
87 min: Red card Nankov (late challenge on Yegros).
88 min: Yellow card Benitez (studs up on Ivanov).

Saudi Arabia 0 Denmark 1

GROUP C: STADE FELIX-BOLLAERT, LENS. ATTENDANCE: 38,140

Goals: 0
Yellow cards: 1 (Al-Muwallid)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 4
Offsides: 0
Free-kicks (against): 15
Coach: Carlos Alberto Parreira

Goals: 1 (Rieper 68)
Yellow cards: 3 (Wieghorst, Reiper, Nielsen)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 10
Offsides: 3
Free-kicks (against): 15
Coach: Bo Johansson

Running commentary

5 min: High Danish corner troubles Saudi defence.
10 min: Yellow card Al-Muwallid (late challenge on Jorgensen).
12 min: Yellow card Wieghorst (foul on Sayeed Al-Qahtani).
17 min: Sand exposes Saudi lack of defensive height without taking chance.
30 min: Wieghorst blasts long shot hard and high, summing up game so far.
32 min: Jorgensen does the same.
41 min: Saudi Arabia's first test of Schmeichel who, capably, saves Solaiman's powerful shot which was going wide.
46 min: Sand drives shot at Al-Daye.

47 min: Schmeichel relieves his boredom with accurate headed clearance.
57 min: Jorgensen's point blank shot blocked by legs of Al-Daye.
59 min: Yellow card Rieper (debating ref's decision on free-kick).
65 min: Bo Johansson sends on Nielsen.
66 min: Schmeichel has first cause to complain about hesitant defence.
68 min: Schmeichel forgives everyone as Rieper heads in Jorgensen's high ball.
72 min: Yellow card Nielsen (over zealous pushing of Al-Khalawi).
78 min: Nielsen's shot pushed away splendidly by Al-Daye.
86 min: Sand drives shot at Al-Daye.

THURSDAY'S LATE MATCH

Cameroon 1 Austria 1

GROUP B: STADE MUNICIPAL, TOULOUSE. ATTENDANCE: 31,800

Goals: Njaka 77
Yellow cards: 1 (Ipoua)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 5
Offsides: 2
Free-kicks (against): 15
Coach: Claude Le Roy

Goals: Polster 90
Yellow cards: 1 (Pfeffer)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 6
Offsides: 2
Free-kicks (against): 13
Coach: Herbert Prohaska

Running commentary

3 min: Ipoua given free header by Austrians.
6 min: Feiersinger important clearance as Cameroon maintain bright, powerful pressure.
15 min: Wet, on Austria's left side, 'breaks through dangerously, not for the first time.
19 min: Oman Bilyk's first opening, but only a hopeful header from 15 yards.
28 min: Angibeaud's accurate long shot well dealt with by Konsel, stretching.
33 min: Lack of composure again spoils Cameroon build-up. Angibeaud shoots wide.
35 min: Wome rifles free-kick through Austrian wall but Konsel parries confidently.

58 min: At last, terrific, accurate long drive by Wome forces Konsel to make fine push over.
70 min: Polster takes free-kick on edge of Cameroon penalty area and pierces big wall of defenders. Songo's blocks safely on his line.
73 min: Songo again shows ability, pushing over a fierce shot from Pfeiferberger.
77 min: Style, and fair surfaces as Njaka weaves at speed down left side past lunges before cutting in and sliding shot in.
82 min: Austria send on three substitutes.
90 min: From corner, Pfeffer heads down and Polster blasts in equaliser.

WORLD CUP BETTING

LABELLED THE great under-achievers, Spain look set to surprise a few people and can get off to the perfect start by beating Nigeria (maybe 2-0 - Stanley go 7-1) at Nantes this afternoon.

Alfonso (6-1 with Lad-

brokes) looks a fair bet to be first goalscorer.

Mexico should beat South Korea (though perhaps only 1-0 - Ladbrokes offer 11-2) at Lyons. Hernandez - 6-1 with Stanley - looks the best bet to notch the opening goal.

Ian Davies

The Netherlands, with Bergkamp back, should take Belgium apart (maybe 3-0 - 11-1 with Stanley) at St-Denis this evening. Kluivert generally 5-1 - looks the best bet to notch the opening goal.

Even if Batistuta and Ortega do not initially live up to their billing with IG as favourites in their 'Dynamic Duo Index', the South Americans can cash in with Jamaica in their final Group H game.

Germany and the defensive USA are also in Group F so it's better to take the total goals in their opening match against Iran tomorrow. PS Shame on any Sporting clients who got a better price by singing the title of 'Sheikh It All Over' market for the Saudi Arabia-Denmark match yesterday.

Richard Wetherell

has lead Sporting to more than half their 'Magic Stretcher Index'. Yugoslavia's 12-1 play-off thrashing of Hungary is obviously behind their rather high total goals quote - 8-8 with three companies.

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Richard Wetherell

SPREAD BETTING

THEY HAVEN'T even played and Argentina have been the biggest mover in the World Cup Index markets. At the beginning of May they were 60-65 with Sporting, by Tuesday they had advanced to 70-75 and are now 75-80. City, with a different scoring system, have gone from 29-33 to 37-41 and make them second favourites.

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WEEKEND REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • SHOPPING • TRAVEL



After the deluge

The mudslides that devastated central Italy were just the start. The real catastrophe is waiting to happen

BY ANDREW GUMBEL

San Vito is a village that civilisation has left behind. Perched on the vertiginous foothills of Mount Vesuvius, outside Naples, it appears as a random cluster of concrete buildings - some completed, some not - that stretch out in straggly lines along a series of rutted hillside tracks. Its rubbish sits uncollected in the searing heat, and its sewage festers in cesspits that slowly bleed their poisons into the surrounding fields. There is no piazza, no church, no recognisable mark of a

civic centre. There are no signposts to point you there, and nothing to let you know you have arrived. Instead of vegetation, there are only weeds, cigarette butts and broken beer bottles.

Almost everything about San Vito is illegal, from the houses built without permission to the cars with out-of-town number plates that suggest either an implausibly high number of visiting relatives or, more likely, a thriving trade in stolen vehicles. Bosses from the Camorra, the Neapolitan version of the Mafia, make little secret of their presence, in well-appointed villas pro-

ected by electronic security gates and surveillance cameras. A uniformed official is a rare sight, the police, even when called out for a burglary or an assault, turn up late or not at all.

But San Vito is more than just a mockery of civic authority. It is a disaster waiting to happen. If Vesuvius should erupt again - and sooner or later it will - the whole tangle of concrete and detritus is likely to be buried or swept away, along with dozens of similar communities that have grown up with reckless abandon on the slopes of the volcano.

Because of a near-total absence of urban planning, an acute housing shortage and an orgy of illegal speculative building over the past 30 years, some 570,000 people now live in the narrow strip of land between Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples risk having their houses, if not their lives, wiped out by molten lava and volcanic ash.

The catastrophe, when it comes, will be twofold: the trauma of the eruption itself, of course, and the man-made disaster that will surely follow.

As the citizens of San Vito and the other hillside communities make their escape towards the coastal plain, they will be running into one of the densest, most heavily congested urban agglomerations in the world. The only viable escape route is the four-lane motorway that runs from Naples to Salerno, past the ancient ghost towns of Herculaneum and Pompeii. This road is packed at the best of times and can only be reached by tiny, tightly curved access ramps obstructed by toll booths. One only has to make the analogy of a rush of blood through a single, dangerously sclerotic artery to understand the inevitable outcome: total systemic breakdown.

"When Vesuvius erupts it will be catastrophic," predicts Pietro Craveri, a professor at the University of Naples. "We're talking about the densest urban area in Europe, comparable only to Cairo or Calcutta. This is a time-bomb just waiting to go off."

Disaster is firmly inscribed on the minds of the four million-odd people who live in the Naples area. A month ago, a cloudburst of early summer rain brought rivers of mud crashing down from the hills 15 miles inland. Turn to page 12

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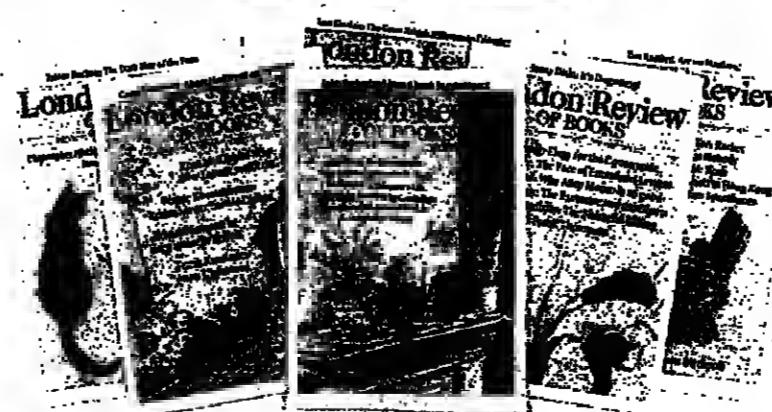
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In the last of our series of pictures from the coast by Nikki English, children enjoy the slightly better weather on the sands at Bognor beach

No EU 'superstate'

Sir: The significance of the letter sent by the French President and the German Chancellor to the Prime Minister this week should not be underestimated ("European superstate is dead, says Kohl", 10 June). In calling for decisions in the European Union to be taken at the closest possible level to the citizen they have endorsed the mission of the British presidency to "give Europe back to the people".

And not before time. As long ago as 1975 the then President of the Commission, François-Xavier Ortoll, said: "European union is not to give birth to a centralising super-state. The Union will be given responsibility only for those matters which member states are no longer capable of dealing with efficiently, other matters being left to member states". This language was echoed two years later by his successor, Roy Jenkins, in a lecture at Florence. But it was not until 1991 at Maastricht that, at the instance of Jacques Delors, the principle of subsidiarity was embodied in a treaty.

Jacques Chirac and Helmut Kohl have not confined themselves to arguing that this principle be more strictly applied in future. Among other things, they also advocate improvement of the working methods of the Council of Ministers and a thorough reform of the structures of the Commission and its services.

With the weight of the three principal members of the Union behind such a programme of reform, there must be a better chance than before that steps will at last be taken to identify the Union more closely with the aspirations and concerns of its citizens.

Apart from this, their clear statement that the objective "has never been and cannot be to build a central European State" should deprive the Eurosceptics of at

least one of their spurious arguments.

SIR DONALD MAITLAND
Both
The writer was UK Permanent Representative to the European Community, 1975-79

Save the salmon

Sir: Michael McCarthy reports on a growing trend of self-imposed discipline by salmon anglers in the interests of protecting the diminishing salmon populations and their sport ("River rescue plan offers old fish for new", 13 June).

Catch-and-release by anglers, and net-and-release in the estuary of the Hampshire Avon has been encouraged for four years by Tesco stores, who reward anglers with a farmed salmon and fund the cost of the live purchase and care of netted fish to the tune of several thousand pounds. The result in 1997 was that 89 per cent of fish caught by both methods were returned alive. Tesco have extended their scheme from this season to include the rivers Test, Itchen, Frome, Piddle and Dart. They are also examining further initiatives.

Laudable though such riverine measures are, they will count as nought unless the mass slaughter of salmon by drift-netting is urgently halted. Commandable efforts by ministers to ban this method of fishing for tuna to protect whales and dolphins will not, they tell me, be extended to protect the more seriously endangered North Atlantic Salmon. How blinkered can you get?

The environment agency admits that 52 rivers out of 65 suffered spawning escapement below

minimum target levels in 1997. Salmon caught in 1997 represent a 40 per cent drop against 1996. Nets caught 31,484 fish to rods 17,706, of which 81 North-east drift nets caught 21,922 fish for which they contributed £70,000 licence income (rods approximately £1.2m). The Irish west-coast drift nets are known to capture up to 20 per cent of salmon returning the English and Welsh rivers. There are massive international surpluses of farmed salmon.

Last year just 151 fish were caught off the once famous Hampshire Avon (2,000 in 1986). So far this year, eight have been caught and returned. We may be too late.

B G MARSHALL
Chairman
Wessex Salmon Association
Linton, Cambridgeshire

Winning whistle

Sir: Roger Dobson (Health, 9 June) highlights the plight of "whistleblowers" and the risks they run in exposing wrongdoing. Whilst he rightly describes the stress and difficulty involved with blowing the whistle, I was disappointed to see that the focus was entirely on the negative.

I was in the unfortunate position in 1994 of having to blow the whistle on my boss. I decided after doing this that it would be best to leave the company, my concerns about being thought of as a troublemaker being the same as the ones expressed in your article.

My boss and his seven co-conspirators were found guilty last July and are now in prison. I received a commendation from the

judge and a substantial reward from my employers, who asked me to come back and work for them. I rejoined the company two months ago and am thoroughly enjoying my work with nothing but positive feedback from all my colleagues.

My concern about articles such as this is that others facing situations similar to mine may be discouraged from acting. The attitude to whistleblowing is changing and companies like my current employer have given a lead. If we keep telling the public that whistleblowing will only do them harm, no one will ever do the right thing.

GARY BROWN
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

We need quarries

Sir: I read with concern the letter from Elaine Gilligan of Friends of the Earth (8 June) commenting on the possible introduction of a quarrying tax. The facts outlined are not correct.

There is a plentiful supply of the natural raw materials that make quarry products: the materials we all depend on for our homes, schools, hospitals, transport network, water and sewerage systems. There is no question of this industry being unsustainable.

Moreover, the quarrying industry is strongly committed to improving the environmental performance of the industry and firmly believes that a quarrying tax would bring no environmental benefits. In contrast a more constructive environmental approach will involve the use of regulation, planning controls and voluntary initiatives.

The industry is also promoting

the increased use of recycled aggregates and has already exceeded its recycling targets set for 2001. However, there is only a finite supply for recycling and we will all continue to need virgin materials.

SIMON van der BYL
Director General
Quarry Products Association
London SW1

End of the peers

Sir: Michael Johnson (Letter, 10 June) advocates an entirely elected second chamber to replace the House of Lords. However, this would merely replace the old rotten system of hereditary power and life peerages as political favours with a different kind of rotten system – no one capable of getting themselves elected should on any account be trusted to rule.

Why not select members of the second house at random from the population as juries are selected? People who are not prepared to take a year's sabbatical from their jobs to serve their country could be allowed to step down.

We would then have a parliamentary body of people who were not interested in power or political manoeuvring or vote-hunting and could therefore do what is right, not what will best benefit their own political careers.

BEATRICE J PURSER
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Morning after

Sir: It is so sad to read ("Warning after the night before", 9 June) of people experiencing difficulty in accessing emergency

contraception. Part of the problem for young people at school is that regulations appear to prevent staff giving plain, confidential advice. I have never thought that there are many teachers unwilling or unable to provide it. If I have understood correctly this also governs the actions of school nurses – often a concerned young woman's first resort.

Any young woman appearing at the reception desk of our GP practice, especially if looking either knowing or troubled, is seen within minutes – no questions asked. Sometimes the issue is emergency contraception.

Whilst I am sure that Carol and Imogen are being truthful (and if I had been either of them I would have punched most or all of their inquisitors), there is another tale to tell of prompt, non-judgemental and even friendly provision.

DR STEVEN FORD
Haydon Bridge,
Northumberland

Beards hit back

Sir: I have had a beard for nearly all of my adult life. I was aware, back in the late 1970s when I grew it, that there was one particular computer company that did not recruit men with beards. This did not bother me; I thought I wouldn't want to work for a company that was so stupid as to include this in their recruitment policy.

I was shocked to read that in 1994 prejudice against beards is so widespread in recruitment policy ("Your career's on a razor's edge", 11 June). I can understand that for

posts that involve persuasive selling to the public recruitment policy may need to follow the prejudices of the market they are selling to, but for general recruitment this is ridiculous. I will be keeping the beard (and keeping it trim and tidy) safe in the knowledge that I will not inadvertently end up working where merit and ability are not prime concerns.

ADAM B COOKE
London W14

IN BRIEF

Sir: The almost universal support for Kosovo's independence, ignoring the "principle" of recognising a country's territorial integrity (Serbia's is directly opposite to the attitude taken to the movement for the independence of the Armenian enclave of Nagorno Karabakh, in Azerbaijan). There, the West is arguing against the claim of the Karabakhis and demanding that the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan be respected. My suggestion to Serbia is that it immediately discover oil under its lands.

ANDREW KEVORKIAN
London W1

Sir: If by "the logo of the Millennium Experience" Robin Allington (Letter, 11 June) means that skinny woman with an Australian war boomerang over her head and her hand about to clutch a lethal Chinese throwing-star, then I should think that for £14,000, the designer could have thrown in a machine-gun.

LEN CLARKE
Uxbridge, Middlesex

Sir: As the primary cause of tooth decay is sugar, is it not more appropriate to add fluoride to sugar rather than salt ("A pinch of fluoride in Scottish salt", 8 June)?

GRAHAM E BELL
St Andrews, Fife

LETTERS SPECIAL
THE INDEPENDENT REDESIGN

Sir: Have you any idea what turmoil you have caused in my daily life? First, you publish Network on a Monday, which means writing to my son and daughter-in-law, to send it on to them, on a Monday instead of a Tuesday.

Today (9 June), chaos followed turmoil, for both me and my neighbours. So wrapped up was I in reading my *Independent* that I lost track of time. This led my friendly neighbour to be so concerned because I had neither pulled back my curtains nor taken in the milk by 9.40am that he knocked on my door to see if I was still alive.

How will I fit in my day's work of letter-writing, consultation paper responses, minute writing for voluntary organisations and attendance at public meetings if you intend to continue to produce a paper that is so physically easy to read that I will study it all I can even read the adverts!

BETTY PERRY
Chelmsford, Essex

Sir: Hurrah, hurrah! You have got rid of my *bête noire*: the tabloid sections, which were such an eyesore. The presentation now is traditional, although the design is in the modern style. It makes your newspaper a joy to read. No need to buy *The Times*!

PATRICK ROWE
London N1

Sir: I have previously been delighted by redesigns of *The Independent*. However, the new offering is something of a backward step. The new font gives a "heavy" feel to the paper, with a significant reduction in white space. Heavy divider lines between some columns are also overdone.

However, the quality of writing and writers has remained, it's just a little harder to read!

ROY GODDARD
Southampton

Sir: At first glance the new typefaces give *The*

Independent a look very similar to the *Telegraph*. As one of the reasons I buy this paper is that it is not the *Telegraph*, I hope this is where such comparisons will begin and end, although I dare say you would quite like their sales.

MICHAEL CRYAN
Newcastle upon Tyne

Sir: Overall, your revamp appears excellent and far superior to the former model. However, I would suggest that the format of the third page of the review section has been copied from the *Leeds Student Newspaper's* Comment pages. The position of the cartoon directly mirrors its situation in ours. I wonder if as well as pitching your newspaper in direct competition to *The Times* and *The Guardian* you are attempting to steal our readers too.

CLARE LISTER
Deputy Editor
Leeds Student Newspaper
Leeds

Independent appointments? Changing of the Guard? Did I pick up the *Telegraph* by mistake? Ah no, here's a terrible graphic on the front page! It must be *The Independent*.

Another month, another redesign (quite nice, though).

How long will this one last?

KEITH BRAITHWAITE
London SE13

Sir: When I read the paper today (9 June), I had the same feeling as when I opened your paper for the first time in 1986. You must have done something right! The broadsheet format of the second section a definite plus.

MARK TAYLOR
London EC1

Sir: We enjoyed the added extra puzzle of devising the grid to fit yesterday's (9 June) Concise Crossword clues. It made a nice extension to coffee break. However, coffee break would have run into lunchtime had we tried to devise both the clues and the

answers to fit the grid that you published. We think, today, you printed the wrong correction and it should have been the grid not the clues and answers. Perhaps you could print another correction.

JOHN FRITH
MARY FRITH
JO FRITH
Teddington, Middlesex

Sir: It really annoys me each time *The Independent's* layout is revamped because you should be spending more of your efforts to get the actual printing process perfected, rather than altering the fonts regularly. My copies are always marred by serious vertical creases on the inside pages. I have written to you before about this but the problem still remains and means some columns are unreadable at times.

PETER STODDARD
Fareham, Hampshire

Sir: Congratulations on the improvements to *The*

Independent, both in content and in presentation. All that is required now is for it to famously become the first newspaper to famously stop saying "famous" when "well-known" is meant.

DR DAVID ZUCK
London N12

Sir: I think your new look is fabulous, but I have one small criticism: "Foreign News" sounds mildly xenophobic – can you not call it "World News" or "International News" instead?

LESLIE BROWNE
London SW1

Sir: What a wonderful surprise to open, and to delve into, today's (9 June) issue of the paper. Most hearty congratulations are due to all who have brought this rebuilt paper to fruition. I am most thankful to have stayed with *The Independent* through the bad days, not without misgivings at times.

But that is water under the bridge. My most profound

hope is that this development can be kept going. A certain tycoon won't like it. The problem is going to be to find the time to do justice to it!

L A MOIGNARD
Leysburn, North Yorkshire

Sir: Congratulations on the new design. It conveys an impression of a newspaper that is packed with informative, solid journalism. None of your rivals has divided their content between two sections as sensibly. I also like the new features such as Monitor and Historical Notes, and the expanded space for obituaries is a real treat. After drifting through all the broadsheets in recent years, it has been some time since I felt so comfortable with my daily paper.

PAUL BREWER
London SE27

Sir: I don't know if anybody thought about the consequences of making the review section broadsheet size. It is now almost

impossible to read while travelling on public transport in London. Opening a broadsheet newspaper while on the Tube invariably involves punching somebody in the face or smacking them with a face full of newsprint.

The review section used to be quite a pleasant read. Now for some reason all the grimiest sections of the paper – obituaries, editorial comment etc – seem to be sitting beside articles on the arts and living.

There must be a better way to attract new readers than by going all Victorian.

NICK DARLOW
London SW11

Sir: You have returned *The Independent*, to being a newspaper instead of a lifestyle rag.

It seems that going back to basics does not always end in failure! Thank you for giving me back a paper I have read since issue two!

ADAM GRAY
London SW6

مكالمات من الأصل

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مکان من از اصل

Mr Blair sets a trap for Mr Ashdown

THIS WEEK'S Joint Constitutional Declaration by Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown is a mixture of high rhetoric and low cunning. On the face of it, it merely restates the programme of changes to the way Britain is governed on which Labour and the Liberal Democrats agree. But the real significance is that, in showing that the programme will take more than one parliamentary term to achieve, the two parties will be bound to each other, however loosely, at the time of the next election.

Mr Ashdown is the clear loser in such an arrangement. Like so many others without his self-proclaimed shrewdness, he has had his wings caught on Mr Blair's silken threads. Newspaper editors, proprietors and columnists, however previously hostile to the Labour Party, have been lured into the spider's web. Even if they oppose the European Union and are apoplectic about issues such as the impending reduction in the age of consent for gay men, they find Mr Blair engaging, go-ahead and sincere. It is the same with business leaders, controllers of the commanding heights of the economy. Today's peerage for Sir Colin Marshall is a case in point. They may hate trade unions, the minimum wage and the Social Chapter, but they think Mr Blair is straight, understands their concerns, and is in some sense "one of us".

And so it is with Mr Ashdown, entangled in his own pieties about consensus politics and ending the yahooboo culture of Westminster. Those are pieties which we have espoused at *The Independent*, too. We favour politicians working together where there is common ground, and do not believe in opposition for the sake of it. But, equally, pluralism and choice are important values in a healthy democracy. Mr Ashdown claims to be providing "constructive opposition" to the Government, and he has opposed New Labour policy quite sharply on occasions. He claims, when attacked by critics within his own party, that his membership of a Cabinet committee - which produced the rather pompously titled "declaration" - is purely about working together on policies where the parties just happen to agree. But the overall impression given by the Lib Dem leader is of being on best behaviour on account of the two carrots dangled before him: one is the prospect of Mr Blair hacking electoral reform in the promised referendum; the other is the possibility of gaining a Cabinet post for himself.

Mr Ashdown has been well and truly trapped by the Prime Minister. So far, the Mr Blair has not budged from his position that he is "not persuaded" by the case for proportional representation. That leaves him free to propose his own form of change to the voting system: allowing electors to use numbers to rank candidates in order of preference - the so-called alternative vote. This would certainly be in the interests of the Lib Dems, but it would not be a "proportional" system.

Much will depend on the attitude of Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, who is charged with coming up with a "broadly proportional" system to be put to the people in a referendum. But Mr Ashdown should recognise that, like so many others, Roy Jenkins has already suc-

TRY THIS:— BLAIR'S BLUES CORNER NO. 1



cumbed - rushed, even - to the New Labour embrace. It was the Jenkins notion of the "Conservative Century" which the Prime Minister adopted to lend a sheen of credibility to his Lab-Lib web. He has talked about Labour and the Lib Dems as "adjacent" parties. Mr Blair claims the Tories won so many elections in the 20th century because the "radical", left-centre forces were divided between the Liberals and their successors, and the Labour Party. It is an attractive notion, but unfortunately it does not bear much relation to the

facts. In the 1950s, for example, the Liberals were a pathetic rump and the Tories still won every election.

Mr Ashdown should stop his hydra-headed approach to politics - one day Mr Blair's best friend and a potential foreign secretary, the next his most corrosive left wing critic - and concentrate on setting out a truly liberal alternative to the authoritarian and centralising tendencies of this government. He might not get a seat in the Cabinet, but he would at least add something to the democratic process.

Hanging out the flags of St George

PUBS, OFFICE blocks, cars, even green fields: suddenly, everywhere, there is a flag. The World Cup has caused them to sprout across the country. But it is the slightly unfamiliar red and white of St George that has blossomed. If, of course, these were symbols of a deep-seated national pride, they might be a welcome sight. Visit any hick town in America and you will see the Stars and Stripes flying from even the most unprepossessing of buildings, from garages to rubbish dumps. One of the most endearing features of American life is the ingrained belief that anyone lucky enough to be an American has already won the lottery of life, and this leads to a pride in the flag at which we can only wonder.

But the flags that have sprung up this week have nothing to do with national pride and everything to do with that aggressive nationalism, bordering on xenophobia, so familiar to anyone who has been to an international football match. Before the World Cup started, Lord Wakeham warned newspapers to avoid what he called the excesses of Euro 96. But it is the newspapers which followed popular sentiment rather than the other way round. The flag waving is a product of this.

The power of flags lies in their shorthand. Sadly, the flag of St George needs only to be glimpsed to act as a reminder of English hooligans rampaging through the streets. In Australia - as in Ulster - the flag itself is a matter of burning debate: as the country debates republicanism, raising the current union jack-based flag is a political statement. The Israeli flag, with the Star of David, has an emotional pull for most Jews. And in South Africa, one of the most immediate statements that there was a new broom was the replacement of the old national flag, with all its apartheid associations, with the new multicoloured one.

The World Cup, however, is just a festival of football. It is not a rewriting of von Clausewitz's description of war as the continuation of politics by other means. So hang out the flags, by all means, but let us hope they are not accompanied by a nasty wave of xenophobia.

Irrelevant honours

IT'S THAT time of the year again. Yes, honours are more often than not an award for toadying or a reward for past behaviour. Welcome to the peerage, Lord Marshall. Yes, they are a perk of some jobs. Arise, Sir John Birt. And yes, they can come in very useful as a bargaining tool. Hello, Lord Burns.

But this time round there is at least a welcome lack of political time servers, the Prime Minister having done away with political honours. The absence of some thoroughly objectionable honours, however, is hardly a defence of a system which is utterly irrelevant to the modern world. Apparently, the Prime Minister is considering replacing the various Empire awards (Order, Member and Companion) with Commonwealth titles - hardly the most radical of reforms.

Still, they do no real harm, and they add to the gaiety of the nation. Who, after all, could object to Sir Geoff Hurst? Keep your fingers crossed, Mr Shearer. If things go well, come 12 July, it could be Sir Alan.

John Humphrys came by chopper, so why did I just get a train ticket?

BY NEWPORT station we sat down and gritted our teeth. Midday had come and gone with no sign of the train. My two-year-old son was threatening to jump on to the tracks in search of Thomas the Tank Engine, my wife was convinced (after years of bitter experience) that I had misunderstood the timetable and I was starting to break into a cold sweat.

We were bound for a literary festival at which I was due to read and answer questions. I pictured a marquee full of patient, earnest faces awaiting my arrival; waiting and waiting until patience gave way to rage.

Urged on by my wife, I approached a pale youth wearing the uniform of the railway company. "Do you know how late it's going to be?" I asked. "I am supposed to be giving a reading at the Hay Festival in a couple of hours."

The youth shook his head and simply said: "What?" Again I questioned: "The train. Even a rough idea how late?" He looked at me with what I took to be pity and replied: "Ah no. I wouldn't like to say six." I tried several of his colleagues with an equal lack of success. Then a woman sitting nearby said she was also on her way to Hay. "You'll make it alright. Don't worry," she said.

As it happened I had returned just the previous day from a three-week trip to Japan

filming a *Great Railway Journey*. In three weeks, and across countless miles of track, not one train had been late. Steam trains, commuter trains, bullet trains. All had arrived and departed exactly as scheduled. And on the one occasion when a train threatened to be late, the apology was fulsome. In this matter at least the Japanese know how to say sorry. When our train lumbered into Newport 25 minutes late, was there a word of apology? Of course not.

By the time we neared Hay-on-Wye, the family stress level was heading for the danger zone. But much, much worse was to come. For as we began the last stage of the journey from Hereford to Hay by our charming driver Nigel, we uncovered a terrible secret: "We had that John Humphrys from the Today programme," he chirped. "They sent a helicopter up to London to get him." A helicopter! From London! While I, the inestimably great Keane was travelling by rail (second class), I was just recovering from the shock of that disclosure when Nigel explained that several other writers not quite in the helicopter class - like Peter Carey - had been chauffeured down from London.

So it was, somewhere between Hereford and Hay-on-Wye, amid the green folds of the summer countryside, that I

One can only hope that the trauma was alleviated by the knowledge that a real somebody from the A-list had arrived in their midst.

It like me, you have produced a book inspired by the arrival of your firstborn, it might seem perfectly natural, even desirable, to bring the said child to an occasional literary event.

At the very least, one would be preparing him for a life on the giddy fringes of celebrity. After Hay, it is something I would strongly caution against.

For it is a scientific certainty that the child will become more waspish, fractious and cross a greater number of adoring readers who surround him. "Is this the famous Dame?" they asked and he frowned in return. And woe betide the one who extended a hand to pat his head. This could produce howls of terror.

At Hay, we went to a charming restaurant on the main street for our evening meal. A woman sat alone by the window. To her right was an open book; to her left a glass of white wine. She was contemplating the rooftops and the last beams of sunlight flooding the street. As we approached, she looked up and smiled. "That little boy looks like one of Botticelli's chubs, a real sweetie," she gushed. Ten minutes later, as our cherub loudly demanded a football and stamped his feet on the ground, I saw her shoulder

muscles tense, a distinct red flush appearing on her cheeks. The poor woman was struggling. At the best of times, it is impossible to control the moods of a two-year-old. Generations of parents have suffered public humiliation at the hands of such infants.

But where other parents at a literary festival might demand a stern reprimand, I must observe a public sweetness that demands immense powers of self-control. No barking, no raised voice. "Now love, won't you be a good boy?" I whimper. If things are looking desperate I might say: "If you're not good, the man will be cross." Just who the man might be is never specified, but his looming presence generally tends to have a quietening effect. And thus, as I ushered the fractious child out of the restaurant and into the street, I heard the other diners saying: "Such a nice man just like in the book."

The reading itself was a dream full of ordinary people listening carefully and asking intelligent questions. I always come away from such events feeling slightly guilty. People are, generally speaking, terribly nice. The media swamp I crawl from is so shallow, self-regarding and venal. I love Hunter S Thompson's description: "It is a shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where pimps and thieves run wild and good men die like

dogs." There is, however, the occasional hazard of the lurking crank. I once almost abandoned a reading in Ireland when a supporter of the Anglo government launched a long and bitter tirade against imperialism and its proverbial running dogs. He included me among the galloping canines.

Still worse are the religious fanatics. Believe me, they are out there. Waiting for their moment. You never know the hour when you will look up from a table full of unsold books to find a beauteous smile and an invitation to welcome Jesus into your life. Hay-on-Wye was blissfully free of such miseries.

After the reading, I collected Daniel from the patient arms of his mother and headed off across the fields. The sun was shining and my son was in his "I am the sweetest child in the world" mood. After a few minutes walking, we came to a field full of sheep. The ground was covered with their tiny black droppings.

"Don't walk on the poo," I warned. "Don't walk on the poo," repeated Daniel. Then he fixed the sheep with a determined stare. "Let's chase them," he shouted and galloped off across the poo-pebbled grass, scattering the flocks before him.

• Fergal Keane's book *Letter from Daniel* is published by Penguin/BBC, at £6.99.

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KOSOVO

Reactions to the escalating tensions between Serbs and ethnic Albanians

DIE WELT
Germany

It is vital that NATO demonstrates to the president of the Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, that his military actions against the civil population in Kosovo are no longer appropriate. If Milosevic is still unmoved, NATO has to increase its potential threat. At the moment, it is difficult to judge what support the moderate powers of the population, keen for autonomy, still have. Therefore, it is questionable whether the Kosovo conflict can be solved with only a few measures. It is more likely that NATO will be brought into action, which would be a lengthy and difficult operation. Is this really what is wanted?

SALON MAGAZINE
Internet

Ever since Milosevic's crackdown in Kosovo began three months ago, the West has responded with hand-wringing meetings by NATO foreign ministers, the six-nation Balkan "Contact Group" (Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States), the European Union in Luxembourg, the White House and the National Security Council. The upshot of those meetings has been a mantra-like recitation of demands for Milosevic to desist and get down to talking to Kosovo's civilian leaders, or face possible military wrath.



TEXAN LYNCHING

The murder of James Byrd, who was beaten, then chained to a car and dragged to his death

LOS ANGELES TIMES
USA

We are told these are "isolated incidents" despite the fact that there have been copycat killings of black men in America for at least 110 years. And yes, there is a name for them: lynchings. About this our society is in determined denial. Even to use the word "lynching" is to risk

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
Australia

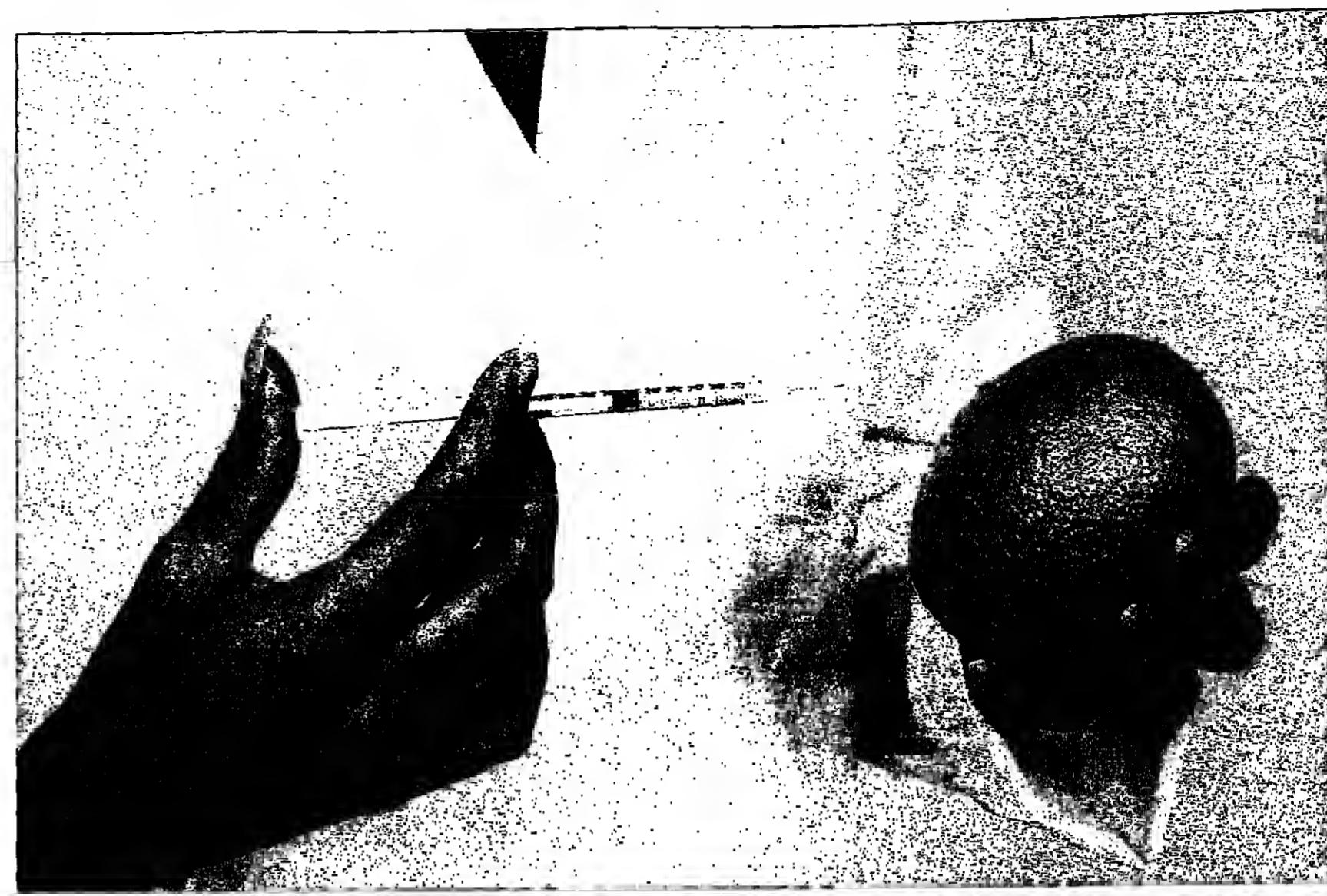
The bloodshed must be stopped, the violence contained, and a demonstration made that there are standards of civilised behaviour everyone must observe. But care must be taken not to play into Mr Milosevic's hands. Kosovo is not (yet) a case of Bosnia revisited. The response from the international community, and NATO in particular, must reflect this. Military action against Serbia eventually may be required but not before all other efforts are exhausted to isolate Mr Milosevic and reverse his latest folly.

WASHINGTON POST
USA

Klaus Naumann, head of NATO's military committee, said the studies concluded that well-executed air strikes could end the conflict, if a political decision is made to intervene. "If we were assigned the task of enforcing an end to the fighting we could ensure that goal with air strikes, just as we did in Bosnia."

THE ECONOMIST
UK

Slobodan Milosevic, perhaps the most incompetent nationalist in modern history, continues to back away at what is left of Yugoslavia. This is horribly familiar. Familiar, too, is the dilemma faced by western leaders: should they watch the bloodshed, as they did for too long in Bosnia, or risk compatriots' lives and their own political careers by getting involved in somebody else's war, as America did in Vietnam.



You are what you eat – a scary thought

GENETICS & FOOD

A call for caution over genetically modified food by The Prince of Wales – and the responses

PRINCE CHARLES,
THE DAILY
TELEGRAPH

I personally have no wish to eat anything produced by genetic modification, nor do I knowingly offer this sort of produce to my family or guests. There is

increasing evidence that a great many people feel the same way. But if this is becoming a widely held view, we cannot put our principles into practice until there is effective segregation of genetically modified products, backed by a comprehensive labelling scheme based on progress through the food chain.

plant and human health. If the first product on the market had been a nutritionally enhanced rice rather than a high-tech tomato, consumer response might now be very different. Today's debate offers scientists another chance to engage the public and assuage their fears. For the future of biotechnology, these are seeds worth sowing.

THE ECONOMIST

Genetically modified crops have great potential to improve

I favour both nuclear and genetic technologies. I find it

many instances this burden of human suffering may be alleviated.

MALCOLM WALKER
OF ICELAND
STORES, THE SUN

I have banned genetically modified soya from own-label products sold in all 770 Iceland stores and will only use suppliers who know exactly where their soya comes from; because to me it is the most worrying problem in the food industry we are likely to face.

ULRIKA JONSSON

Following the attack on the TV presenter by her (now ex) boyfriend, footballer Stan Collymore.

DAILY MAIL
UK

The truth is that America has tried to sweep its deep racial problems under a carpet of political correctness and positive discrimination. No, James Byrd's death is not an aberration. It is part of a trend that is casting a dark shadow over America.

DAILY STAR

Ulrika has shocked pals with her capacity for booze – she's even been known to carry around a hip-flask full of Scotch.

MISCELLANEOUS

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
Australia

A culture of sexual intimidation and harassment exists at the Australian Defence Academy because a flawed concept of discipline is applied. Instead of discipline, group loyalty and obedience is inculcated in first-year cadets largely through the tyranny of senior cadets. Loyalty becomes a case of not "jacking" (informing) on mates and not "crossing the road" (complaining to superiors). Under a forced code of silence based on a perverse loyalty code, seniors abuse their juniors and males harass and assault females. This is not discipline, but a gross caricature of it.

COPENHAGEN POST
Denmark

An erotic sex pressure group has threatened to hijack this year's summer solstice festivities by staging a Bible-burning stunt. The main organiser of the sex trade fair "Erotic World", Kenneth Strandby, has pledged to set alight over 10,000 Bibles. The Bible represents nothing good. It's a 2,000-year-old lie, and the Church and the Bible are to blame for almost all things evil.

BUSINESS WEEK
USA

The sacred Japanese rite of Sumo which dates back 1,500 years is fighting its toughest opponent: Japan's economic slump. The drop in attendance which began a year ago is a grim omen for the more than \$100 million-a-year sport. Yen-pinching customers are less willing to fork out over \$15 for seats near the stadium's rafters. And companies are terminating expensive box-seat reservations and sponsorships.

RESEARCH BY SEAN O'GRADY
AND SALLY CHATTERTON

Football, a metaphor for war

THE WORLD CUP

The beginning of the world's most popular sporting event

HERALD TRIBUNE
France

For good or not so good, football mobilises people, admits their participation in rejoicing or disappointment, introduces excitement and suspense in their various lives. It is something in which all who choose can share. They have other differences, but this is a meeting of hopes. Vive le foot!

LIBERATION
France

Cheered on by a chauvinist crowd and crushed by its brutal supporters, each team symbolises what is most intolerant about each nation. Football becomes a metaphor for war, a pedagogy of hatred. Each football war is fought according

to strict rules: on what battlefield could a referee interrupt and send off those who are fighting dirty? After which war would the vanquished battalion accept defeat and promise to do better next time? Perhaps football is a metaphor. Or rather, perhaps it is a state of law in which the man in black regulates conflicts and tames instincts.

THE EXPRESS
UK

The World Cup has become a football tournament for people who don't actually like football ... But once the fanfare is over and the new fans have stopped wittering on about Glenn Hoddle's puritanism robbing England of their one true star, once the epicentre of football has shifted from bourgeois France where the wine is fine, the food is fabulous and the footballers spout poetry, to Bradford or Burnley where it isn't, and they don't know many of these fans will still be around? If you think you've recently caught football fever try

going to watch Leyton Orient on a damp drizzly day. It's amazing how quickly your temperature can drop.

TIME
USA

(Advice to Scottish fans.) "... just remember one thing: Despite what Del-boy says, Bonjour does not mean goodbye."

THE ROLLING STONES

Reaction to the band's decision to postpone its British tour because of changes in tax law

THE MIRROR

TONY Blair's favourite record is the Rolling Stones' *Beggars Banquet*. He might like to reconsider. The band's members

are far from being beggars yet have shown that they care only for themselves.

Between them they have amassed a £350m fortune. Yet still they cancel their British concerts to avoid tax.

The fault lies entirely with the selfishness and greed of the Stones. If they never appeared on stage again, or sold another record, they would still live in luxury for the rest of their lives.

Instead they have decided to let down the fans who have provided their fabulous wealth. One of the songs on Mr Blair's favourite

album is *Sympathy For The Devil*. There will be no sympathy for the Rolling Stones after this.

THE TIMES

When Tony Blair was no more than an Ugly Rumour, there was nothing he wanted more than to be Mick Jagger. Now it is Jagger who wants to swap places.

While Jagger might prefer a soirée at Buckingham Palace, and the chance to swap tips on tax minimisation with the monarch, Mr Blair would until now have loved to have the Stones round for a jam. But, as either man could now say to the other: you can't always get what you want.

DAILY RECORD

If this were merely an argument about four old rockers and their money, then of course the verdict would be obvious – The Stones simply ought to pay up, and play on. But their showdown with the taxman has wider implications. It finally dispels the myth that rock'n'roll is a bohemian art which somehow remains aloof from the mundane questions of how to earn cash and how to hold on to it.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"The packet of biscuits I opened for my elevenses this morning was wrapped up in more layers than a pensioner going out in the snow" — Playwright and commentator Keith Waterhouse

"Being blonde means never saying anything you don't understand unless you want to be predictable" — TV personality Mariella Frostrup

"Gardening is the new rock 'n' roll. When I was little, it was all fuddy-duddy Percy Thrower. Now it's very social and very, very fashionable" — Ex-supermodel Ali Ward, who has switched careers to become a model gardener

"I would rather be round and jolly than thin and cross" — Shadow Health Secretary Ann Widdecombe, talking about her "enormous" appetite.

"Apparently God is a Europhile" — Former Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, Norman Lamont

Hammond Innes

LIKE JOHNNY Appleseed, the legendary American frontiersman, Hammond Innes had a kindly obsession for planting trees – acres of trees, forests of trees; in places as far apart as Suffolk, Wales, Canada and Australia – perhaps as some kind of statement for all the quantities of timber cut down and processed into the hundreds of thousands of copies of his best-selling adventure novels.

And perhaps not, for Innes was "green" decades before the notion was at all sexy, although he did not view or write about the environment sentimentally. During the 1950s, sickened by the long-drawn-out death agonies of whales not quite killed by defective grenade-harpoons, he championed the idea of electrical harpoons to ensure instantaneous death: both British and Norwegian money was poured into the project but in the end the technical problems proved insurmountable.

This was characteristic of Innes: he was ever a practical man – at the time whale-hunting was an economic necessity – yet with a strong humane streak in his make-up. He was also, as he once admitted, intoxicated by the sheer thrill of the chase, the careering dash through mountainous waves and the pitting of the whalers' wits against a Leviathan that might weigh as much

lifting him out of the general ruck of thriller writers, establishing him as a writer that serious critics (such as Elizabeth Bowen and J.W. Lambert) took seriously.

Ralph Hammond Innes was born in Horsham, Sussex, in 1913 and educated at Cranbrook School, Kent. Leaving at the age of 18 he odd-jobbed during the early Depression years, successively in publishing, teaching and finally journalism, in 1934 joining the staff of the old *Financial News* under Brendan Bracken. In 1936, poorly paid and needing money to get married, he hanged out a supernatural thriller and sent it to an agent in Fleet Street. The agent, who normally only handled articles and short stories for syndication, managed to sell the manuscript to Herbert Jenkins, a publisher whose chief asset was P.G. Wodehouse but who also issued light romances, cheap thrillers and westerns for the less excited circulating libraries.

To his horror, Innes discovered he had been tied down to a four-book contract, with the distinctly ungenerous advance of only £30 per book (at the time £4 plus was the norm for a non-literary novel) and a two-year deadline, which turned what had started out as a quick way of raising the wind into fearsome drudgery. Even so the four thrillers he produced – *The Doppelganger* and *Air Disaster* (both 1937), *Submarine Broadcast* (1938) and *All Roads Lead to Friday* (1939) – are certainly no worse than most actioners churned out by those publishers (such as Jenkins, Stanley Paul, Melrose, Skeffington or Hurst & Blackett) who specialised in providing high-octane thrills dashed off in low-octane prose.

Indeed, in some ways they are rather more interesting, Innes (then an ardent socialist) managing to infiltrate into his plots a mildly subversive anti-establishment undercurrent unusual in genre fiction of the period, when the status quo was rarely questioned. In later years, however, he disowned them – not because of his political stance (his politics were always leftist), and "not because", as he later explained to the writer Peter Tremayne, "they are particularly bad, but because mixed in with the main body of my work they would look a bit ham-fisted". None of them ever earned much more than their initial advances, although, as Innes pointed out, "I couldn't really complain, because writing those four books I least taught myself how to do it".

That this was true was proved when, with some relief, he changed his publisher in 1939, moving to Collins, and proceeded to write three more thrillers which were markedly superior to the Jenkins



Innes: a compulsive traveller, a true been-and-seen-and-done writer, never at ease unless he had experienced his backgrounds for himself

as 90 or 100 tons, and still drag the dead weight of a small whaler through the water, venting blood in scarlet plumes as it died.

Innes himself had experienced in full the "thrill of the chase", as well as its attendant dangers. In 1947, researching for his *The Blue Ice* (1948), he lived with Norwegian whalers on the islands off Bergen, on occasion hunting with them, often in the dirtiest weather, with a full gale blowing and ploughing through the waves that the whalers themselves referred to as "choppy seas" (in reality, waves as high as the mast-top). His grueling experiences, as well as a stint on the flesing decks of the factory-ships where he helped cut the meat out of the dead giants, were later put to even better use in his epic novel of survival in the vast Antarctic icefields, *The White South* (1949; a Book Society Choice and filmed in 1954 as *Hell Below Zero*, with Alan Ladd and Stanley Baker), the book that was instrumental in

books – although a better contract and a healthier advance cannot have hindered the creative process.

Innes was a compulsive writer. His third book for Collins, *Attack Alarm* (1941), was written on a gam-site after he had joined the Royal Artillery; the manuscript of his fourth, *Dead and Alive* (1946), emerged with him when he was demobbed (rank: Major), just after completing an arduous skiing course in the Italian Dolomites ("Stiffer than any army course I was ever on, including battle training") which he later utilised as background for his sixth, *The Lonely Skier* (1947), a superbly constructed and atmospheric thriller which first alerted both critics and public that here was a writer to watch.

He was also a compulsive traveller – a true been-and-seen-and-done writer, never at ease unless he had experienced for himself his backgrounds, honing his prose on the whetstone of reality. For *Madam's Rock* (1948) he crewed on a

friend's yacht in the Fastnet Race; he hitched a lift with the RAF into blockaded Berlin at the height of the airlift for *Air Bridge* (1951); and around the same time he was in San Sebastián when Vesuvius erupted and lava rolled over the village; the result was *The Angry Mountain* (1950).

In the early 1950s he began a long and profitable association with the prestigious American travel magazine *Holiday*, whose editors virtually bankrolled his world-wide odysseys – although after 1956 the question of finance hardly arose. In that year he published *The Mary Deere*, which at a stroke launched him into that rarefied empyrean most writers yearn for though few attain, super-sellerdom. This apparently simple tale of conspiracy and fraud on the high seas was transformed into an epic drama through Innes's consummate handling of the forces of nature. His talent for vivifying landscapes (the bleaker, the more hostile the better), natural phenomena,

the weather (usually at its most implacable) had been readily apparent in the books he had published since the end of the Second World War, but in *The Mary Deere* his art reached a peak of virtuosity. His narrative skills, his unerring sense of pace, his vivid and enthralling descriptions of overwhelming natural forces all combine into a magnificent story of high adventure and suspense.

The hugely successful 1959 film of the book, *The Wreck of the "Mary Deere"*, starring Gary Cooper at his craggy best, was a bonus which enabled Innes to buy his own 42ft ocean-racer, not unromantically named *Mary Deere*, in which, invariably accompanied by his ex-wife (his soul-mate would not be too coyly a term), Dorothy, he sailed around the coasts of Europe and Asia. Minor in search of stories for over 15 years, each year made up of six months travelling, six months writing. Most of these travels were later spellbindingly logged up in *Harvest of*

Journeys (1960) and *Sea and Islands* (1967).

Innes's intense love of the ocean naturally provoked keen awareness of the environment, and the perils, mainly of human origin, facing it. His novels became increasingly propagandist, at times verging on the exhortatory, though his narrative drive was never buried beneath a mass of accusatory statistics, sheer anger at man's folly and greed in any case bringing them alive.

When, in his late sixties, he gave up sailing, tree-planting took over as the passion of his life, particularly the planting of Sitka spruce, a fast-growing softwood. *High Stand* (1985) was his "tree" novel, just as *The Big Footprints* (1977) had been his "elephant" novel and *The Black Tide* (1982) his "oil" novel. Planting trees tended to keep at bay an ever-threatening pessimism about the nature of the planet, and the future of man. He felt a need to return to, not precisely the simple life but a life

more in tune with the natural forces he could describe so well. "As we have become more technological," he once said, "we have lost a lot. There were things those early people understood that we don't."

During his life he was constantly hailed as "a storyteller of the old school", which usually denotes a lumpen style, marked authoritarian attitudes and the sensitivity of a concrete block. Such was never the case with Hammond Innes, a man who wrote absorbing and exciting books and expressed in them, and in his own way of living, a genuinely life-enhancing philosophy. In his own field he was, as his fellow adventure writer Duncan Kyle admiringly remarked, the nonpareil.

Jack Adrian

Ralph Hammond Innes, writer: born Horsham, Sussex 15 July 1913; CBE 1978; married 1937 Dorothy Loring (died 1989); died Kersey, Suffolk 10 June 1998.

E. H. H. Archibald

THE 4,000 oil paintings in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, include more portraits than any other English collection, except the National Portrait Gallery, with which there was long an active collusion on who had claims on what. "Wearing my National Portrait Gallery hat," said the NPG trustee Viscount Stanhope, of an unusual Cromwellian item, "I say that should go to Greenwich" – where Stanhope was at the same time the NMM's first chairman of trustees (1934-59). Such a tale: witty, well-observed and usually true – though not always exact – was the style of history painted by E. H. H. Archibald, who was for over 30 years the curator of that enormous oil collection, and oversaw acquisition of nearly a quarter of it.

What the exact topic was, so long as it appealed to him, did not matter: marine art, portraits, rare books, glass and ceramics, arms and armour, flags, costumes and manners, ships, cars, aircraft, the history of the Royal Navy and "its traditional enemies, the French", that of the museum itself, dogs (he bred Afghans), plants, exotic birds and fish.

All were subjects on which he had something to say which you might not hear from anyone else, or at least

not in the same conversation and in his way, knowing but unperturbed, fresh however often told, and punctuated by his peculiar ticks. "Quite?" and "Don't y' know?" were interjections of urban astonishment or mild disbelief; a long "yes" expressed sardonically, doubt, its depth in direct ratio to the length of the period. "Do you think this picture is by or after Blaggs, Mr Archibald?" "Well... yerrrrs (heavy pause) – before going to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1945 to read History, though not seriously enough to get more than a modest degree.

He however exercised a keen eye, his rooms filled with friends and with 17th-century portraits, glass, rare books and armour bought at very low prices. At Sotheby's sale of the Stead Collection in 1948 he put up his hand at £3 for a tray of chain mail, got it at £2, and came away with one of the best 15th-century hauberk out of public captivity. This he twice wore to all-night dances, observing how light it was, though for a man even bigger than his handsome six feet.

In 1951, after three years in the family firm, Archibald was "bowed over" by the Greenwich collections, while in London for an unsuccessful Colonial Service interview. He corresponded with the NMM director,

Frank Carr, and – with 127 others – applied for a post in the picture department under Michael Robinson. He joined in May 1952, his British interests complementing Robinson's in the Dutch school. Between then and his retirement in 1984 he became the anchor of the museum's expertise in oils, who they were by, what they showed, and was a mine of advice to anyone with a genuine interest: in the 1950s and 1960s when the museum had significant private funds and prices were low he was sometimes able to acquire 50 a year.

"Leggett's rang in 1956 to ask if we were interested in an early portrait of Captain Keppel by Reynolds: 'Would £150 be too much?' I said, 'No' was fairly typical. 'How about £500 for the two?' he asked a Welsh jobbing dealer who had cheaply bought five large canvases from the Cardiff Coal Exchange in 1968, thus securing a superb W.L. Wyllie of the bombardment of Alexandria (1882) and a 15th Charles Dixon of the sunken German High Seas Fleet entering Rosyth.

Other things were more recondite, from identifying the hand of Isaac Sailmaker to reattributing many of the Palmer Collection of early Dutch pictures acquired with a special Treasury grant in 1963.

In 1961 HMSO published his *Preliminary Descriptive Catalogue of the NMM's portraits and the following year he organised a then pioneering and stylish "mixed media" exhibition on "Passengers by Sea".*

He wrote the accompanying booklet, and also organised in 1964 the only exhibition ever devoted to the artist-voyager John Everett, whose work was willed to the museum.

However, his main publishing successes were where knowledgeable enthusiasm rather than scholarly reference could predominate. Though now sniped at by more thorough if less engaging specialists, his two specially illustrated books on *The Wooden Fighting Ship in the Royal Navy 1660* and *The Metal Fighting Ship 1700* sold 60,000 copies in all and it would have been more if not refused to allow a cheap edition. His *Dictionary of Sea Painters* (1980) will reappear later this year in a third, enlarged edition and, though lacking rigour, is likely to remain a standard source.

Its writing was partly based on a world trip round galleries and museums which he took as unpaid leave in 1973 when it was clear he was going to end his career as it began, simply as Curator of Oil Paintings. For by then times had changed. Archibald

fitted well into the "gentlemen's club" of Frank Carr's regime but less and less into what followed.

From 1967 the museum became a bigger and more complex organisation, with wider interests and increasingly unsympathetic for a connoisseur of fixed views (many reactionary) and little truck with the deference and flexibility that other brands of authority required. The historical catalogue of NMM paintings that he completed was not in a form suitable for publication by the early 1980s and he was sidelined, perhaps inevitably but to its detriment, in the computer-based work which led to the published *Concise Catalogue of NMM's oils in 1986*.

By then he had taken early retirement and, though he acted as a private consultant, wrote some informative recollections and continued to live close to the museum, his last years were ones of increasing loneliness and depression, springing from unresolved conflicts in his nature and worsened by heavy drinking. It was difficult to help him, in the periods he seemed on top of things, he refused to acknowledge that anything was wrong.

Generous and honourable man as he was, with a great gift for friendship with all sorts, Teddy Archibald's

isolation also drove him into some associations in which his kindness was much abused. It became hard to foresee a better end than the one he met when his iron constitution finally gave up, after several weeks well cared for in hospital. His last known words, spoken from sleep, were characteristic: "But who's it by?" (as of a picture) and the name of the last of his much-loved collies.

Pieter van der Merwe

Edward Hunter Holmes Archibald, museum curator and writer: born Belfast 24 January 1927; Curator of Oil Paintings, National Maritime Museum 1952-84; died London 27 May 1998.



DIETRICH GOLDSCHMIDT, as much as anyone, was the voice of conscience in a post-war Germany trying to come to terms with its past. As a devout Christian of the "Confessing Church" involved with Pastor Martin Niemöller and Helmut Gollwitz, he became a leader in Aktion Sühnezeichen (the "Repentance Action Committee") which to this day tries to atone for the sins of the Nazi period and served as a mediating voice between Church and university. Last February, the Technical Uni-

versity in Berlin awarded him an honorary doctorate to add to the many distinctions he had achieved in the course of a remarkable life. Between 1933 and 1939, Goldschmidt had taken a degree at the TU in engineering and factory design. As a "half-Jew" he was only permitted to be a factory worker and from 1944 to 1945 was condemned to do slave labour in a war-camp.

After the Second World War, he studied at the University of Göttingen, where he also taught. Goldschmidt made major contributions

in the fields of education and sociology, describing himself as a "sociologically orientated generalist" as his work embraced more and more areas. In 1956 he became a professor at the Pedagogic University in Berlin and then, from 1963 until 1982, served as one of the directors of the Max Planck Research Institute. In 1966, the West German government appointed him to the Deutsche Bildungsrat dealing with reforms within the German education system.

Goldschmidt was a leader in the dialogue between Christians and Jews, particularly through his work with the Working Group of Christians

and Jews at the Kirchentag which meets every two years at a Protestant assembly bringing together almost 200,000 participants.

His many books include *Technology in Developing Lands* (1980); *The University as an Institution: present problems and future trends* (1983); *Between Elite and Mass Education* (1983); *Under the Last Desecrations ("Under the Burden of the Holocaust")*, 1989; and a biographical study of Rabbi Robert Raphael Geis (1984).

Many of the German notices of his

death mention Goldschmidt's private initiative in helping a village of old and suffering Jews in Drohobych in Ukraine and asked that it be supported in his memory. Even in death, he endures as a voice of conscience.

Albert H. Friedlander

Dietrich Goldschmidt, educator and political activist: born Freiburg, Germany 4 December 1914; Professor, Pedagogic University, Berlin 1956-82; Director, Max Planck Research Institute 1963-82; died Berlin 20 May 1998.

Josephine Hutchinson

IN ALFRED Hitchcock's superb thriller *North by Northwest*, a chilling moment occurs when the hero, Cary Grant, having taken the police to the mansion where he has been held captive, is confronted with an outwardly charming, handsome woman who professes to be the respectable wife of a senator and, with a benign tolerance, all the more chilling for its surface kindness, confesses that Grant had too much to drink at the previous night's party. Josephine Hutchinson, who makes this brief role so effective, had decades earlier been a leading theatrical player, a film star at Warners, and a celebrated dramatic coach. She also had a total of three husbands and a legendary lesbian affair.

Hutchinson was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1898 (although some sources claim 1900). Her mother was the actress Leona Roberts, best remembered for her portrayal of Mrs Meade, the doctor's wife, in *Gone with the Wind*. Through her mother's acquaintance with Douglas Fairbanks Sr, the petite, Titian-haired girl was given a small role in *The Little Princess* (1917) starring Mary Pickford, after which she studied drama and dance in Seattle for three years, making her stage debut as a dancer at the city's Metropolitan Theatre in *The Little Mermaid* in 1920. For two years she worked with the Rams Head Playhouse Company in Washington, run by Robert Bell, the son of Alexander Graham Bell, and in 1924 she and Bell were married. The following year she made her Broadway debut with an acclaimed performance in *A Man's Man* opposite Pat O'Brien.

Gladys Calthrop, designer for Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre, saw Hutchinson in the play and, when Le Gallienne fired Rose Hobart from the role of Irla in *Three Sisters*, Calthrop recommended Hutchinson. "She is beautiful, direct and possessed of emotional reserve," wrote one critic of her performance. Le Gallienne's troupe, considered the nearest thing to a permanent repertory theatre that America had had, presented low-price classics, and nurtured some of America's finest talent.

Hutchinson played in Ibsen, Chekhov and Shakespeare as well as an acclaimed Wendy opposite Le Gallienne's Peter Pan (1928). The *Herold Tribune* recorded: "Josephine Hutchinson gave to Wendy the right sense of budding motherliness that the part demanded."

"It was the best training that could happen," said Hutchinson. "Often we would rehearse six or seven plays in one week... Le Gallienne was my teacher in both love and work." Hutchinson had led a protected life until her marriage, usually in the company of her mother (who also joined Le Gallienne's troupe). "It's quite natural for actors to fall in love with the people they work with," she said later, and she and Le Gallienne started an affair. "It was good and normal and healthy," she stated. "There was never any sense of shame connected with our relationship."

She and Bell remained good friends,

and in 1930 he allowed her to divorce him on fictional grounds of extreme cruelty, though the *Daily News* headlined, "Bell divorces actress, Eva Le Gallienne's shadow." Hutchinson moved in to Le Gallienne's apartment and made headlines again in 1930 when a water heater exploded when being lit, igniting Le Gallienne's dress. Hutchinson and a maid heat out the flames, both receiving bad burns. Le Gallienne's hands remained badly scarred.

The following year Hutchinson won rave reviews for her performance as Alice in a delightful Le Gallienne production of *Alice in Wonderland* with Le Gallienne as the White Queen and Burgess Meredith as a duck on roller skates. In 1934, her relationship with Le Gallienne faltered, Hutchinson asked the agent Leland Hayward (whose associate, James F Townsend, she married in 1935) if he could arrange a screen test for her. At Warners, she tested with the final scene from *A Doll's House* (her Nora had already been lauded on stage) and was signed to a lucrative contract.

Her film debut, the musical *Hippiness Ahead* (1934) with Dick Powell, was not auspicious. As a rich girl posing as

'It's quite natural for actors to fall in love with the people they work with,' she said

a poor one after falling in love with a window cleaner, the actress, perhaps realising that she was too old for the role, smiled a lot with desperate coquettishness in possibly the worst performance of her career. She was fine as a woman who falls in love with the brother of her invalid husband in *The Right to Live* (1935), based on Somerset Maugham's *The Sacred Flame*, and superb as the supportive wife of an oil company executive with divided loyalties in *Oil for the Lamps of China* (1936), memorably pleading with her husband's company that they keep him employed, but neither film did well commercially.

She gave another fine performance as a caring wife in *The Story of Louis Pasteur* (1936), prompting the studio to announce that Hutchinson would star in a biography of Marie Curie, but instead they gave her *I Married a Doctor* (1936 - Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* with a happy ending unconsciously added) and Michael Curtiz's sombre *Mountain Justice* (1937), based on a real-life tale of a girl from the backwoods of Virginia who killed her brutal religiously fanatical father and was nearly lynched.

Hutchinson's assignments had not allowed her to develop a strong style, and in 1937 Warners let her go. Freelancing, she did a lot of radio work (she had a beautifully modulated voice),



Hutchinson in *Mountain Justice*, 1937
Kobal Collection

playing opposite Clark Gable in a 1937 broadcast of *A Farewell to Arms*, and more films including, at Universal, one of the very best of their horror cycle, *Rowland V Lee's Son of Frankenstein* (1939), in which she played Elsa Von Frankenstein to Basil Rathbone's baron. "The director had a theory that dialogue learned at a moment's notice would be delivered more naturally. For actors like Basil, Binky (Lionel Atwill) and myself trained in the theatre technique, this is not true." The film started a lifelong friendship with the actress and Boris Karloff, who was playing the Monster for the last time in his career.

As the wife who dies leaving her son to be spoilt by his father in *My Son, My Son* (1940) and the wife of headmaster Cedric Hardwicke in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1940), Hutchinson gave assured performances, but her starring days were over and she temporarily gave up performing to become an acting coach at Columbia Studios, her pupils including the contract players Adele Mara and Marguerite Chapman. "I had gone to several drama coaches," said Chapman, "but learned more from Josephine Hutchinson than all the others put together."

Hutchinson returned to films with Joseph Mankiewicz's gripping film noir about an amnesiac *Somewhere in the*

Night (1946), followed by a series of mother roles - to Shirley Temple in *Adventure in Baltimore* (1949), Elizabeth Taylor in *Love is Better Than Ever* (1952), Jennifer Jones in *Ruby Gentry* (1952) and Dean Stockwell in *Gun for a Coward* (1957). She was aunt to Tommy Sands in *Sing, Boy, Sing* (1958), and the director Michael Curtiz, noted for remembering his former leading ladies, cast her as the Widow Douglas in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1960). The actress was now concentrating more on television than movies - she was in four Perry Mason stories and was featured in the television movie *The Homecoming - A Christmas Story* (1970), the forerunner to *The Waltons*, *Cumsmoke, Rashdie, Twilight Zone, Dr Kildare* and *Burke's Law* were other series in which she appeared. She was a mother again - to James Caan - in her last film, *Rabbit, Run* (1970).

In 1972 she married Staats Cotsworth, with whom she had acted in the Civic Repertory Theatre 40 years earlier.

Tom Vallance

Josephine Hutchinson, actress; born Seattle, Washington 12 October 1898; married 1924 Robert Bell (marriage dissolved 1930); 1933 James F Townsend; died New York 4 June 1998.

GAZETTE

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Major Sir Ralph Anstruther, royal equerry, 77; Mr Nicholas Brown MP, 48; Mr David Curry MP, 54; Professor Inga-Stina Ernbark, former Professor of English Literature, Leeds University, 66; Mr Tom King MP, 65; Capt Norman Lloyd-Edwards, Lord-Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, 65; Mr Malcolm McDowell, actor, 55; Sir Peter Marychurch, former Director, GCHQ, 71; Mr Michael Meliush, former President of the MCC, 66; Dr Barbara Reynolds, lexicographer, 84; Col Sir John Ruggles-Bryant, Bt, former Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, 90; Mr Peter Scudamore, jockey, 40; Mrs Mary Whitehouse, founder and President Emeritus, National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, 88; Mr Andreas Whittam Smith, founding editor of *The Independent*, 61.

TOMORROW: Sir James Black, pharmacologist, 74; Mr Paul Boateng MP, 47; Dame Florence Cayford, for-

mer GLC councillor, 101; Professor Peter Fowler, archaeologist, 62; Miss Steffi Graf, tennis player, 29; Lady Healey, biographer, 80;

Baroness Knight of Collingtree, former MP, 51;

Mr David LeRoy-Lewis, former chairman, Henry Ansbacher Holdings, 80; Miss Dorothy McGuire, actress, 75; Mrs Yvonne Moors, chief nursing officer and director of nursing, Department of Health, 57; Sir Gerard Peat, chartered accountant, 78; Mr Jonathan Raban, novelist and travel writer, 56; Miss Kathleen Raine, poet, 90; Dame Rosemary Rees, former president, BMA, 70; Mr Pierre Salinger, politician and journalist, 73; Mr Anthony Sher, actor and writer, 49; Mr Nigel Short, chess player, 33; Lord Smith of Clifton, Vice-Chancellor of University of Ulster, 61; Mr Mike Yarwood, entertainer and impressionist, 57.

ANNIVERSARIES

TODAY: Births: Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy,

actor, director and producer,

1396; Catherine ("Skittles")

Walters, courtesan, 1839;

William Butler Yeats, poet, 1865; Basil Rathbone (Philip St John Basil Rathbone), actor, 1882; Dorothy Leigh Sayers, thriller writer and playwright, 1893. Deaths:

Alexander the Great, 323 BC;

Benjamin David (Benny) Goodman, clarinettist and bandleader, 1986. On this day: Queen Victoria made her first railway journey (from Slough to Paddington in 23 minutes), 1842; Mrs Geraldine Brodrick of Sydney, Australia, gave birth to nonuplets (of whom two boys and four girls survived), 1971; inflation in Britain reached 25 per cent, 1975. Today is the Feast Day of St Antony of Padua, St Aquilina, St Felicula and St Triphylus. Today is the official birthday of the Queen.

TOMORROW: Births: Harriet Beecher Stowe, novelist, 1811; Burl Ives (Burke Ives), actor and singer, 1909; Sam Wanamaker (Samuel Wanamaker), actor, director and producer,

1919; Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (Che), Argentinian revolutionary, 1928. Deaths:

Edward Fitzgerald, poet and translator of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 1883;

Jerome Klapka Jerome, writer, 1927; Emmeline Pankhurst (née Goulden), women's rights champion, 1928; Gilbert Keith Chesterton, writer, 1936; Maxim Gorky (Alexei Maximovich Peshchakov), writer, 1936; John Logie Baird, television pioneer, 1946; Henry (Enrico) Mancini, film music composer, 1994. On this day: at Dunkirk, the English and French decisively beat off the Spanish in the Battle of the Dunes, 1858; Henley Regatta was held for the first time, 1859; the world's first motor-race was run in Paris, 1895; the Hawaiian Islands were set up as a Territory of the United States, 1900; the "Black Bottom" dance was introduced in George White's *Scandals at the Apollo* Theatre, New York, 1928; the German army entered and occupied Paris, 1940; a ceasefire was agreed in the Falklands, 1982. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Dogmael, St Methodius the Confessor and Saints Valerius and Rufinus.

LECTURES

TODAY: National Gallery: Jacqueline Ansell, "Boating (G): Claude, Seaport with the Embarkation of Saint Ursula", 12pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Ghislaine Wood, "Sources of Art Nouveau", 2.30pm.

Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Spatial Illusions: Stubbs to Bridget Riley", 1pm.

British Museum: George Hart, "The Nubian Temples of Rameses the Great", 1.30pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Louise Leates, "George IV as Collector and Patron", 3pm.

TOMORROW: Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Pop Art: a bonus for abstract artists", 2.30pm.

port, Dorset. **TOMORROW:** The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron and Twelfth Man, Lord's Taverners, attends a Patron's versus President's Charity Cricket Match at the Home Park Cricket Ground, preceded by lunch at St George's School, Windsor Castle; and as Trustee, attends the Prince Philip Trust Fund for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Gala Show at the Theatre Royal, Windsor. Berkshire. Princess Alexandra attends an Art Garfunkel Con-

cert at the Palladium Theatre, London W1, in aid of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry

Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion

Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, after the Queen's Birthday Parade at 11am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, Scots Guards, Irish Guards and Welsh Guards. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; 1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment mounts the Queen's Guard, at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounted by the Grenadier Guards.

HISTORICAL NOTES

JEAN MOORCROFT WILSON

An uncharacteristic act of vandalism

"If I had the choice of making friends with Tennyson or with Sassoon," wrote Wilfred Owen, shortly after meeting the fox-hunting man at Craiglockhart War Hospital, "I should go to Sassoon." And a month later Owen was describing him as "Keats + Christ + Elijah + my Colonel + my father confessor + Amenophis IV in profile." A clear case of a younger, less established poet's hero-worship for a handsome, successful senior, you might think. But is this stereotype the full truth?

While it is undeniable that Sassoon felt superior to Owen in a number of ways when they met - physically, socially, psychologically and as a poet - very few people realise just how snobbish Sassoon's attitude towards Owen was. "He was embarrassing," Sassoon told Stephen Spender when he asked him about Owen. "He had a Grammar School accent."

It is also true that Sassoon had a profound influence on Owen's war poetry, in terms of both subject-matter and technique. Some of the more memorable touches in "Anthem for Doomed Youth", for instance, including its arresting title, were the result of Sassoon's direct suggestions. Under the stimulus of his company Owen drafted more than a dozen poems at Craiglockhart, at least four of which were among his best work. But what is less well known is that Sassoon also benefited from the extraordinary coincidence of their meeting at Craiglockhart. Not only did Owen's comments hearten and help him as he showed Owen work destined for *Counter-Attack* and *Other Poems*, but Owen's method of approach began gradually to change his own. "To remind people of [war's] reality was still my main purpose," Sassoon wrote in 1918, the summer after his meeting with Owen, "but I now preferred to depict it impersonally and to be as much 'above the battle' as I could. Unconsciously, I was getting nearer to Wilfred Owen's method of approach." And Owen's influence is visible in even more specific terms: Sassoon's "unreturning army that was youth", for example, surely echoes Owen's title "The Unreturning".

The most intriguing discovery I made, however, concerned the two poets' personal relationship. Sassoon's own



letters to Owen, most of which have survived, give us a fair idea of how he felt about the younger man at the time. But Owen's feelings are more difficult to pin down. While Sassoon says little to suggest a romantic attachment, in Owen's few surviving letters to Sassoon there is already enough to fuel speculation about the precise nature of his attachment.

Certainly he was to regard his first meeting with Sassoon as an epoch in his life, even remembering the exact shade of his blue dressing-gown Sassoon was wearing, and he was to replay the scene frequently in his head, as lovers do. Another sign of the strength of his emotions is that on the occasion that he spent a whole day with Sassoon, sharing breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner with him, he failed for once to write the usual letter to his doting mother. But perhaps the most compelling indication that Owen's feelings crossed the borders of contemporary convention is a curious incident which occurred long after his death, when his brother Harold was editing his letters. Though Sassoon had promised to show Harold all Wilfred's letters to him, when Harold arrived as arranged Sassoon changed his mind and subsequently burnt the bulk of them. Harold believed that there was something too intimate in them, which Sassoon wished to conceal. Certainly his uncharacteristic act of vandalism throws a new light on his relationship with Owen.

Jean Moorcroft Wilson is the author of the newly published first biography of Sassoon, *Siegfried Sassoon: the making of a war poet* (Duckworth, £25).

ONE OF the few things on which all of the world's major religions agree is that true charity is not only good in itself, it is good for you. The wisdom that has come down to us is that the practical expression of compassion can ennoble both the giver and the given-to. Magnanimity enlarges the spirit.

Yet something appears to have gone wrong. The simple dynamics of the Good Samaritan don't seem to work any more. For one thing, the almsgiver today rarely has any direct encounter with the person he is helping. The parable of Dives and Lazarus has the poor man sitting at the rich man's gate; but nowadays most of the soliciting is handled by middlemen. Our response to their fund-raising techniques is necessarily a kind of virtual compassion. Victims of hunger or cruelty or disease are presented to us not in person but in carefully chosen images and nicely calculated turns of phrase. We cannot hear them or touch them or speak to them. We will never know them. Indeed, it is not their comfort or healing that our money will pay for, but that of "others like them", who are even less real to us.

Of course, there are beggars on our streets we can meet face to face, but here we are confused. The media tell us they may be bogus - and anyway we know that even the poorest of them is only comparatively so. The absolutely destitute live overseas. Real charity begins abroad.

Clare Short has questioned the way that the media, prompted and assisted by the aid agencies, continue to confront us with pictures of stick-thin children. If their purpose is to provoke us to give more help to the poor, she maintains, they are in the long run defeating themselves: these images only encourage the belief that the people of the Third World are perennial failures and victims, which is not only untrue but damaging to their cause.

She could have said more. The harrowing scenes we are shown both exploit and obstruct our natural emotional reflexes. It is like hearing terrible

screams from the house next door and being asked, "Would you like to help prevent domestic violence?" Of course we say yes, but there is no catharsis in it. Some might say that charitable ends justify such means. So what if it hurts the rich when you pull at their heartstrings? They will survive; the poor may not. But - if the practical outcome is all that matters - compassion that finds no satisfaction in giving is likely to become bitter and mean. Frustration is not good for the heart.

There is a second problem. The contraction of the world to a global village is overwhelming us with its suffering. When

FAITH & REASON

HUW SPANNER

Giving to charity is not meant to be some kind of financial self-flagellation. We need to find ways to make it rewarding to be generous to the poor

But it is not just the material consequences of our giving that matter, but the spiritual effects, too, on the rich as well as the

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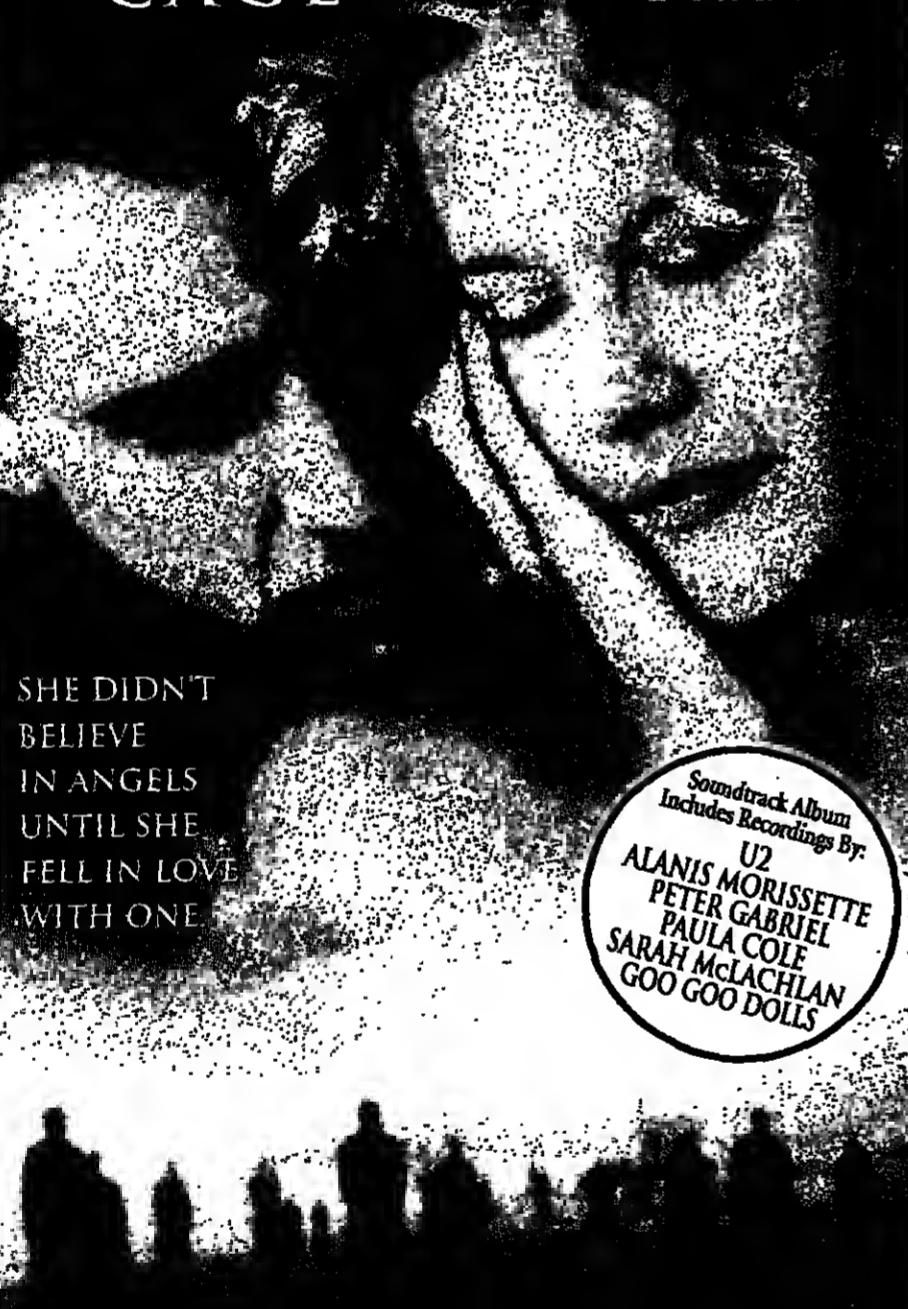
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The pen is mightier than the needle

Edward St
Aubyn's novels
are the only
therapy he
needs. So
what's this
about New Age
cures? By
Clare Garner

EDWARD ST AUBYN STRETCHED himself out on the sofa and stared at the ceiling, a habitual pose, I imagine, for someone who has undergone four and a half years of psychoanalysis, five days a week.

Psychoanalysis is not the only therapy this novelist has sampled. Besides attending numerous sessions at Narcotics Anonymous to recover from a 12-year-old long heroin addiction, St Aubyn has toured New Age outposts from the Findhorn Institute in Scotland to the Esalen Foundation in North California, via psychedelic psychosis in Canyonlands, Utah. And all in the name of research.

For the best therapy of all, he insists, has been writing. St Aubyn knew from an early age the power of words. When he was nine, he was reading a page of the dictionary every night.

St Aubyn was dyslexic as a child. "I could hardly read and spell very badly. My father decided to help me learn to spell, but he only used words I couldn't have heard of. He said, 'Well do spelling every day.' I was expecting him to say 'car' or 'policeman' and then it was 'fridescient'. That was the first word."

By the age of 12, he had already started writing his first novel, but it was not until 1992, when St Aubyn was 33, that he had a book published. *Never Mind*, the first in a semi-autobiographical trilogy, is a harrowing account of his tortured childhood and tells the story of a boy who is buggered by his father at the age of five. St Aubyn acknowledges that the power of his writing stems directly from his relationship with his sadistic father.

At the age of four, St Aubyn asked his father what the most important thing in the world was, to which came the reply: "Observe anything". Critics have praised St Aubyn's merciless power of observation, but his father's advice was, says St Aubyn, "a tainted instruction".

"I observed everything with hysterical anxiety. If we went for a drive, I would memorise every number plate we passed and recite them. If we went to a friend's house, I would describe every object in the house and reproduce precisely what everyone had said. This question of observing things and having some mastery of language is associated with placating a murderous and abusive father."

His father is now dead. Indeed St Aubyn's second novel, *Bad News*, begins with Melrose flying to New York to collect his father's corpse. The novel is about the heroin years and was described by Peter Cook as the best portrait of drug addiction he had ever read. The concluding volume, *Some Hope*, was a devastating satire of the unpleasantly rich.

And now there is *On The Edge*, his first non-autobiographical novel, published last



Edward St Aubyn's mastery of language was to placate a murderous and abusive father

Philip Meech

month. This time St Aubyn is widely perceived to have surpassed himself. Beyond his brilliant characterisation and finely tuned satire, this book is "pierced with goodwill, tenderness and a new kind of thoughtfulness," wrote Andrew Barrow in *The Spectator*.

St Aubyn says the world of alternative therapy appealed to him as a novelist: "The most fundamental questions could be approached through the most absurd territory." But, after all

the confessional sessions, the Chinese medicine and herbal tea, the shiatsu, the feng shui, the narcotics and healing hands, is he dismissing the whole lot as "absurd"?

Apparently not. When I put it to him that he was taking a cheap shot at vulnerable people, demolishing them with his remorselessly precise use of language, he rebounded: "God, no. There isn't any contempt in the humour of *On The Edge*, whereas there is something

quite chilly about *The Trilogy* — and quite contemptuous. It comes quite close to its subject matter, which is cruelty. I think the tone of *On The Edge* is much more lenient."

St Aubyn set out to establish whether there was any persuasive rationale behind the mishmash of therapies and mumbo jumbo of jargon which amount to the New Age. "I noticed a kind of New Age wash tinting people's lives, including my own, without anyone real-

ly thinking what model of reality lay behind it." He added that he was as guilty as the next man of leading "a slightly schizoid life in which you drink the camomile tea, put calming aromatherapy drops in the bath and then take the sleeping pill".

Researching *On The Edge*, St Aubyn participated fully. "There was a tremendous pressure to come up with a good trauma. To begin with, I would present the facts of my life in *The Trilogy*, and it would be clear that this was worthy material, but at the same time, my relationship with it was by then completely inert. I'd get sucked into the group and think I was cheating them unless I was prepared to talk about something contemporary, which was genuinely troubling me. Any attempt to keep an aloof position, a position of observer, seemed to falsify the evidence I was examining."

He first went to Essalen in 1994, but kept going back "again and again." "It's so beautiful and it's full of charming people. I have rather a weakness for Californian hippy chicks, so that drew me back... You can say that the last chapter was thoroughly researched," he said, referring to *On The Edge*'s climax. "It's a comic ending. Instead of a dance at the end of the comedy, it's Tantric Sex."

'On the Edge' by Edward St Aubyn is published by Chatto & Windus at £10.99

EXTRACT

ON THE EDGE



Peter looked out of the telephone booth. The Pacific, sparkling among the dark branches of a cedar tree, made him pause long enough to disarm.

"You're probably right in a way. I don't really know what I'm up to," he said. "We're all so fragmented, perhaps we can never know ourselves as a whole."

"Are you all right?" said Mrs Thorpe, her opposition replaced for a moment by maternal concern. "You're not cracking up, are you?"

"No, I mean, I had this strange feeling the other day. Maybe I felt whole then, or maybe it was just a new bit of me emerging."

"You are cracking up," said Mrs Thorpe, no longer in any doubt.

trial re-employment by a merchant bank?"

"You sound so different," said his mother. "You used to plan for the future."

"Well, just now I'm trying to live in the present."

"That's what animals do, darling, we've got minds."

"And what are they for? Buying life insurance?"

"But I don't think it is true, not deep down."

"You mean the deepest thing about me is my potential."

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Who needs a snooze button...

RADIO WEEK

By LOUISE LEVENE

ON DO SHUT UP, man. Hardly have I prised open my eyes than Petroc starts bugging my ear with his glibly gormless patter. My dislike of Radio 3's *On Air* presenter may not be in the same league as Armando Iannucci's (whose half-page diatribe in the Telegraph a few months ago might easily have driven lesser disc jockeys to suicide) but it's definitely not what you want first thing in the morning.

"Leave him dear!" cried an inner voice, so I've been flinging desperately with Henry Kelly who keeps Petroc's old seat warm back at Classic FM. But

life on Planet Kelly is not life as we know it. In Kelly's world, trombone-playing nuclear families send in requests for their piano teacher on the eve of her retirement. These stinging sentiments are coyly relayed by Kelly, his delivery drizzled with oil (corn oil). It's a style not heard since old doodah and thingy lit up the lives of the BFFPs with *Two Way Family* Favourites. So I retreat further. Back to the welcoming arms of the *Today* programme.

Legend has it that *Today* sets the news agenda for the entire day. Politicians who aren't neatly fielding the inquisitorial

equivalent of a dolly are apparently glued to Radio 4 for the duration, keeping their fingers on the pulse of Middle England. In which case maybe they are as baffled as I am that its five-million listenership can be so easily satisfied by its often strangely soporific mix.

Most radio alarms come with snooze buttons, but who needs them when you've got *Weather and Thought* for the Day? Every morning I listen to some over-familiar meteorolo-

gist carve the British Isles into yet another implausible weather system. "Heavy showers with some sunny spells later in the South, Outer Hebrides, East Midlands, Western Scotland and far South West" and every morning I lose the plot about half way in — what was the middle one again?

Anyway, I still find it virtually impossible to get my head round centigrade. Does 19 degrees mean a cardigan or not? You knew where you were with "Cloudy 66".

James Naughtie, who remains a fresh voice in the Radio Reigate of the *Today* pro-

gramme, seems to understand. "And the weather is... awful" he announced on Thursday. Only to be gently reminded by John Humphrys that some people (rice farmers, taxi drivers, ducks...) might regard heavy rain as a godsend.

By this time I'm fiddling insanely with the dial, wading through the caffeinated cotton wool that pads the airwaves in the early hours. Suddenly I hit a nice bit of Gershwin. Gershwin sans Petroc. Of course, I know it's only a matter of time before he sticks his ear in but at least the earmuff is punctuated by some decent tunes.

مكتبة من الأدلة

'No government can stop this disaster'

AFTER THE DELUGE
(FROM PAGE ONE)

Two towns, Sarno and Quindici, were deluged as the mudslides consumed streets, houses and bridges. More than 160 bodies have been recovered, and several more remain unaccounted for. But this is not the worst that Naples has had to endure, or is likely to face again in the future.

There have been countless smaller landslides in recent years, plus a handful of earthquakes, including the shockingly powerful tremor that brought half of southern Italy to its knees in 1980. The pattern of these disasters is always depressingly familiar: a freak of nature compounded by the irresponsibility of a local government that is either corrupt or non-existent, by erosion of the environment through industrial exploitation, deforestation and pollution, and – more often than not – by the consequences of an uncontrolled rash of illegal building.

The recent mudslides are a case in point. The hills above Sarno and Quindici, which were once farmed intensively, have now been abandoned: trees and shrubs have withered and died, and dry stone walls and terraced cultivation have disappeared, making the ground loose and prone to severe erosion. It certainly does not help that much of the groundwater is pumped for consumption across southern Italy, nor that the river Sarno is polluted with effluent from a tanning factory.

The Naples area as a whole is an extraordinary mixture of awesome natural wonders and human abuse, of beauty and catastrophe. Not only is there the looming presence of Vesuvius to the east, but also volcanic activity to the west around Pozzuoli, where the land periodically rises and falls under the pressure of subterranean gases.

The city of Naples itself is ringed by verminously steep hills that have been covered by a labyrinth of asphalt and low-grade housing, much of it the result of corrupt land deals or illegal construction. Landslides are a constant fear. In many places, the ground forms a thin layer of talaceous rock above a network of vast underground caverns. The combination of poorly applied cement, inefficient drains and open sewers sometimes cause the ground to give way altogether and suck a river of urban confusion into the depths.

In the old days Neapolitans put their faith in their quixotic patron saint, San Gennaro, to ward off the worst of these ills. The saint is still venerated in a three-yearly ceremony at the Cathedral in which a phial of his blood mysteriously turns liquid as a sign of his continuing protection.

But most people, particularly the younger generation, have put such fatalistic superstition to one side in favour of more materialistic solutions to their prob-



Trecase, in the shadow of Vesuvius. It might look picturesque now, but when the volcano erupts again, it won't be so pretty

Riccardo Venturi

lems. For a population that until a generation or two ago was still eking a miserable living from the land, owning property remains the key priority.

The first outbreak of illegal building came after the war, and was accompanied by a particularly virulent collusion between building speculators and corrupt local politicians that was famously denounced by Francesco Rosi in his film *Le Mani sulla Città*. A half-hearted attempt at regulation came in 1972, but the result was merely to drive what few official building projects there were out of the market and leave the field open to illegal speculators backed by the Camorra. Over the next 20 years, the hills, the coastline and the formerly modest towns beneath Vesuvius turned into an unbroken field of concrete.

Ancient Pompeii, which should have served as a stern reminder of the dangers of building under the volcano, was blocked in on all sides by its modern namesake. Ancient Herculaneum was virtually swallowed up by the new settlement. Ercolano, and is now invisible either from the railway line above or the seafront below. In some cases the builders obtained a token license from the city, usually to build an outhouse or a shed that was then expanded into a cluster of houses or a tower block. But most of the time they didn't bother.

In the words of the city planning expert Roberto Gianni, the local political authorities showed nothing but "neglect, if not scorn" for the rape of one of the most beautiful bays in Europe. "Construction was the engine driving the whole Neapolitan econ-

omy. The only way people understood the term "planning" was as a licence to keep building more," Gianni said.

There were more reasonable periods, such as the Communist administration of 1975-83 which succeeded in knocking down a few hundred illegal buildings and impounding thousands more; but these operations were bitterly opposed by public opinion, the media and even the courts. The Left tried to draw a distinction between illegal housing built out of need and the venal speculations of property developers; the distinction did not really exist, though, and was largely a symptom of the political class's subjugation to the construction magnates.

Modern Naples is little short of a basket case. It has the highest birth rate and the highest population growth in Italy; its

population density is 15 times the national average. Traffic moves more slowly (10 mph) than anywhere else in the country. Astonishingly, only 26 per cent of Naples province is connected to a proper sewage system. Of 3,300 criminal proceedings currently in progress in Italy for crimes against the environment, 90 per cent are in the Campania region around Naples. Up in Chiaiano and Camaldoli, in an area that was all wooded rolling hills until the 1970s, the sewage flows through natural river beds and seeps into houses.

Many of the chestnut trees that stood proudly upon Naples' highest hill have been infected and died. Much of the area has been used as a quarry for tufa, the soft yellow rock on which Naples is built. Some of the quarries in the area are a hundred me-

tres deep, driving a series of alarming sheer wedges into the natural landscape. They are all illegal, but that did not stop the city council from using tufa from these quarries to restore the Royal Palace for the G7 meeting held in Naples in 1994.

Some effort has been made to preserve the geological integrity of Camaldoli hill by opening a city park at its summit. But the park is unmanaged apart from two middle-aged men on work experience schemes. Much of it has been closed off for lack of maintenance; the chestnut trees have been pruned in years and are dry, brittle and dying. The chances are high that one day part of the hillside will simply崩塌, drowning the suburbs of Pianura Sconca below in mud and rock.

What can be done to avert such catastrophes? Precious little in the short term. The good news is that illegal building has gone to a standstill since the collapse of the political order under a sea of corruption scandals, and the election of an energetic left-wing city council in 1994. There has even been a return to agricultural land use on a modest scale.

But the bad news is that the problems of illegal houses and environmental blight are too huge for any city government to tackle within a reasonable time-span. Roberto Gianni, who is now chief town planner, has ambitions to create a green belt of countryside on the hills above the city. The head of Chiaiano district, a young architect called Agostino Di Lorenzo, wants to turn one of the tufa quarries into an open-air theatre.

Across Naples, the strategy is to look at illegal projects that could feasibly be turned into full-blown housing developments and offset them by identifying buildings that need to be knocked down for environmental or security reasons. That way urbanisation can be contained and the city can gradually breathe again.

The problem is that this strategy cannot work beneath Vesuvius, where population density is so great that there is no room left for manoeuvre. The only way to shift people and make room for parks and proper roads would be to build further up the mountain, which is not an option. The city of Torre Annunziata has not even closed its absurdly positioned hospital, which lies at the point where one of the main lava flows from Vesuvius would flow into the sea in the event of an eruption.

A few hundred yards uphill, the people of San Vito see little reason to put any faith in the state. "When the moment comes, nobody will come to save us," lamented one resident, a middle-aged man who wanted to be known as Gennaro. He gestured vaguely towards the Camorra compound a few hundred yards from his house. "This is a place where the strong get ahead, not those who follow the rules. We're afraid of a lot of things besides the volcano."

THIS WEEK IN THE SEVEN-SECTION
INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY



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Time Out

What all the best-dressed corpses will be wearing

Death is no
excuse for bad
dress sense.
By Glenda
Cooper

"DYING IS an art like everything else/I do it exceptionally well". So said Sylvia Plath. But then she was an American.

The British way of death has been more subdued. Until the death last year of Diana, Princess of Wales, when a nation surprised itself with its expressions of grief, it has been thought that the British did not know how to raise dying to an art form.

The death industry is wanting to transform itself. And today an exhibition will be held – in a scene straight out of the 19th century – when one of the oldest funeral-makers in the country shows off the winning funeral gowns from its national competition. It is fashion to die for.

The skies were a funeral grey, the rain pouring down as the exhibition was prepared this week in Peterborough, the first stop on a national tour. Held in the lavish carriages of the Nene Valley steam railway, the day had been designated "Travellers' Rest" – the sort of grim joke that appeals to the death industry.

Most of us would rather not think about what happens at the end. But Vic Fearn and Company want us to. And more than that, they want us to think about going out in style.

"Do we affect fashion in the grave?" asked the Duchess of Malfi, awaiting the executioner sent by her evil brothers. "Most ambitiously," her coffin-maker replied. The Duchess would be satisfied at Nene. All around are gowns and shrouds for the well-dressed deceased, from a sateen gown with a huge picture of the Sacred Heart or an



Adelaide Acolatse with her immortal design, 'Landscape in Spring' Steve Hill

ion to the gilty black and red tutu, from the long white bridal garment to the Marilyn Monroe gauze. Nina Simone blares out. Morbid? No, say the organisers, it is time that we address the British fear of death.

Sue Pearl, one of the exhibitors and a woman who has studied cultures of death around the world, believes fervently that we need to change our attitudes: "We should see someone's death as a way of celebrating their life. In the West, we are very anal repressive about death."

"I'd like to see something like Madagascar where people have a temporary burial while the relatives save up for two or three years and then, when they have the money, they have a reburial and a really big party. Or like New Orleans, where they have bands and dancing."

Many of the gowns are delicately made and draped over exquisitely constructed mannequins. So, for a moment, you forget what they are for until you find yourself peering over a sateen gown with a huge picture of the Sacred Heart or an

18th-century-style muslin gown dedicated to the Titanic.

Helpers at hand are eager to tell you that it is fashionable in Ireland to be buried in your suit, whereas in England the plain white gown is still the norm.

It is at moments like these that you start to think you are suddenly on the set of television series *The Addams Family*, but for those who work with death, it is a banal fact of life.

While everyone else winces when someone shouts "Mind the coffin – do we want one in here or two?" or invites you to sit down with a cup of coffee next to a beshrouded mannequin whose wire hand is waving gently in the wind, these people take it all in their stride.

"Well the great thing is business is never bad. My dad used to be a gravedigger, and our house is in a cemetery," says Claire Lawson, another of the exhibitors. "I've always lived around graveyards. I thought it was normal. I suppose other people thought it was freaky."

David Crampton, one of the directors of Vic Fearn, agrees that, in the end, it shows more respect to make sure our dear-

est get a good send off, however alien we may find pre-planning. One of his favourite customers is a lady in the North East, who has already taken possession of her coffin designed to look like a Red Arrows plane.

"We are very, very traditional in this country. We wanted to change that. But let's face it, we're not an industry which does a lot of PR," he says.

"It's not grim," says Urvika Williams, also of Vic Fearn. "We just don't want people to be fearful. We want to beautify death and give people more choice, on what is such an important occasion to make a personal gesture."

But for those who feel all this might be getting a bit much, we still have a long way to go before our cult of death reaches the level of former civilisations.

Jessica Mitford, taking a tour of the Museum of Embalming in Texas, came to the section devoted to ancient Egypt and exclaimed: "Now that was a society that let the funeral directors get completely out of control!"



DR ANTHONY TWORT

JOINED THE NHS IN 1948

ANTHONY TWORT was lucky to train at St Thomas's and get his first house job there. "In those days it was dependent on how you did in your exams, but also who your father was and luckily my father was there."

He remembers the beginning of the NHS clearly. "There was a feeling of suspicion about the NHS, particularly in the teaching hospitals. For a young person like me, you were so busy it didn't make a great deal of difference, but I had mixed feelings. Obviously, there was the benefit of government money but there was also the anxiety about lay administration and who was in control. I remember the Christmas show that year where we all sang a song 'The Army of Clerks Has Won the Day'."

Dr Twort worked in casualty and once every four weeks they would have what they called "a major week" when surgical and medical emergencies were pushed through. "I remember seeing one chap at the end of one of these major weeks. He was so exhausted. He was near breaking

point. We used to yearn for a few bed blockers so that we could get another emergency case in to be dealt with."

"The Resident Assistant Physician and the Resident Assistant Surgeon had the real control. The consultants would do their Harley Street stuff and they varied an awful lot. We used to appreciate consultants who could talk about something outside medicine, who could talk about Shakespeare or philosophy. At that time, it was very much that the patients weren't told anything; there was no sense of the partnership idea in those days. And so there was quite a lot of this Sir Lancelot Spratt business. There was often a lack of sensitivity that was absolutely shocking to the house officers. I remember one paediatrician consultant being irritated by a mother who was only asking him for some information and he turned round and told everyone, including the students 'This poor child is suffering from water-tight'."

He said that the atmosphere of the hospital was quite religious. "Prayers on the wards and nurses singing hymns." But the question of euthanasia did come up. "It was helping people. People who might linger in a miserable way might be given slightly more painkillers than was strictly necessary. It was quite well known."

When Dr Twort started, the NHS was very different from today. There was no ultrasound, no imaging techniques, primitive radiotherapy used radium which could be hazardous and there were no computers, which he feels has made a tremendous difference.

"But one of the biggest differences now, I think, is the great expectations on behalf of the population. The whole idea of demand and the confidence people have that they should get what they want. There is a greater moral responsibility now because of the problem of financing and the whole current debate over rationing."

Dr Twort is glad that he worked in the NHS all his life. Asked what he thinks it will be like in 50 years' time, and he raises his eyes to the sky. "Heaven only knows."

SAURABH JHA also decided to go into medicine, following in his father's footsteps. "I decided quite a long time ago I wanted to do medicine. I thought it would be a fairly promising career, although I didn't have a clue what it involved."

Dr Jha is a surgical house officer which means unless he has spent the night on call, he's expected to be in at 8am when he's working, and will not finish until about 6.30pm. He works in a team of three, with two other house officers, and his main work is to do the two ward rounds every day. "We go through the list and see which of the patients are high priority, and which are low priority, and divide up the workloads. So at this stage in my career, I am not doing any surgery. My job is to look after the patients, take forward the paper work, discharge them and manage the follow-up."

He thinks consultants are less aloof than they used to be and that the doctor patient relationship has altered radically since Dr Twort's day. "It certainly has done in surgery. We explain all the options to the patient now and the relative merits of these options as far as possible, and get them to make the decision, although we obviously say which decision we would prefer that they take. But informed consent is now seen as a very important part of the surgical procedure."

Despite the increasing technological advances, he thinks that it is important to maintain a human side to the NHS. "The one thing I won't forget, the one thing I'm proud of, is when I was in medical school here, and there was a patient who was getting very, very frustrated because they had been waiting quite a few hours for their procedure, and no one seemed willing to speak to them. So I just sat down for 20 to 30 minutes and managed to calm them down, and that's what I'm really proud of."

Does he feel that Dr Twort's fears about the army of clerks is justified? "I think bureaucracy is something that more senior people in the NHS than me have to worry about," he says tactfully. "It doesn't really affect me."

Looking back over the NHS for 50 years, he singles out two things as very important. "In technological terms, first the advance in day surgery so that people can go back home the same day as long as they're young, healthy and fit. The second advance is keyhole surgery which means that post-operative stays and complications have been very much reduced."

How does he think the NHS will be in 50 years to come? "I think there still will be an NHS which will survive. The people of England have got used to using the system and you can't take away from them, although I think certain specialities will be more or less private, such as orthopaedics. I don't think we're going to become the United States, though. I think insurance companies have probably reached saturation point. You have to believe in the NHS to justify your presence working here," he says.

But he doesn't necessarily see himself in the NHS in 50 years' time. "The financial rewards of private work would be welcome alongside the work you do for the NHS."



DR SAURABH JHA

JOINED THE NHS IN 1997

Game of two generations

Football is more than a sport – especially when it's the emotional concrete in fathers' relationships with their sons. By Bruce Millar



Bruce Millar and Darcy play fantasy football Neville Elder

WE MAKE an impeccably choreographed double act in front of the TV – each gesture in unison, every movement timed to perfection; our very brows knit simultaneously, our mouths form O shapes for a sharp intake of breath. I am watching the World Cup with my seven-year-old son Darcy. We make the moves by instinct, now quietly concentrated, now leaping from our chairs with the guttural male roar that turns my wife's stomach.

The boy's learning fast. Only last year he burst into tears, thinking something terrible must have happened when I let out a loud whoop of celebration at a Chelsea goal while watching a match on TV. Now he makes more noise than I do. After a recent game with Broomwood Boys under eights, Darcy announced: "Let's go to the pub and drink beer." And it's not all conditioning: his 10-year-old brother Tom has the full complement of boisterous male characteristics but has never seen the point of football.

Darcy is, give or take a few months, the age I was in 1966, when England's only World Cup victory became one of my key early memories – and which has blighted watching England ever since. Unlike earlier or later generations, I have been conditioned to think that England do have a right to win the World Cup. More bizarrely, perhaps, Darcy wants Norway to win.

Back in '66, we didn't need tabloid newspapers to tell us the final against West Germany was a replay

of '45, and Alf Ramsey had already let us know that Argentinians were animals. Kids these days just don't get it. Why Norway? "England have won the World Cup once before, so it's only fair," Darcy explained to me. "Besides, Tore Andre Flo plays for Norway." This young beagle of a striker joined Chelsea last year and quickly established himself as Darcy's favourite player – he wanted to invite Tore Andre for Christmas lunch with us but he was such a long way from home. Forget about the Euro: football's megabucks, multi-national Premiership has already destroyed national boundaries for Darcy's generation. These differences count for little

again, the boy who watched England win the World Cup in 1966. Forged primal screaming, rebirth therapy, LSD – through the agency of football I have achieved that holy grail of psychologists, the controlled regression. I have delved deep into my subconscious to recapture the clear, innocent vision of a child. And, as we play, I recognise my childhood reincarnated in front of me as my son.

The links go further. When I recall England's march to triumph in 1966, two specific memories come to mind: I was always wearing pyjamas and a dressing gown, and my father was always watching with me. For the following 10 years, the closest, most relaxed, most exclusive relationship I had with my father was in front of *Match of the Day*. So the act of watching football with Darcy gives him a direct link with a grandfather who died 15 years before he was born.

Some time ago, I was in a room full of students invigilating an exam when, to my astonishment, I found myself in tears reading an article in which a father said he could no longer bear to watch football on TV since his son had left home for university, so acutely did he feel the son's absence. How I recognised the emotion. For too many years I have watched football alone, faintly dissatisfied, or on occasion, sought comradeship in a pub with a big screen. Now Darcy is old enough I realise that, for me, watching football is not about watching with mates: it is a father and son thing.

"IT'S LIKE THIS, mate," says the big man as he grinds a cigarette end into the pavement and hitches up his trousers around an ample waist. "We're your new ambassadors."

He pauses for effect and takes a bite out of a warm Kairdip pie before continuing: "We've got to smile. Not all the time though, you'd look stupid wouldn't you? When I see a foreign bloke, I've now got to smile at him. You can tell they're foreign because there's something about them: they've often got white macs on."

The big man is a Cardiff cab driver and he is enthusing about this coming weekend when the European Summit circus rolls into town.

Ahead of the summit, which will be attended by Europe's 15 heads of state and their entourages, some 700 of the city's cabbies have attended a three-hour course at a council-run charm school to learn how to be smart, courteous and tolerant.

Some, says the Wales Tourist Board, have also been given a six-language tool kit, which allows them to "sort out any basic problems, from saying hello at the terminal, stating the fare, to giving change and directions".

But it's not just the cabbies, their shirts emblazoned with Proud to be Professional over the left breast, who have been gearing up for Le Weekend, when the Queen, 60 European heads of state and ministers, plus 1,500 delegates and support staff, and 3,000 media folk descend on the city.

With around 5,000 opinion leaders in town and a potential worldwide

television audience running into millions, the city is taking the opportunity to show off its assets.

The summit, which marks the climax to the UK's six-month presidency of the EU, will bring in £2m this weekend and the TV exposure will permanently boost tourism to the tune of £3.7m or so a year.

One big problem has been solved: a much publicised search for a hotel

castle – but not the new green fields in the adjacent valleys that were once coal pits – visitors will be able to lap up a cosmopolitan culture.

Those visitors prepared to look beyond the official entertainment – including the Euro Wave Floral Exhibition – will be able to sample food and drink such as Skuill Attack, a local beer; the Caroline Street Welsh kebab, faggots and peas, and the legendary "aarf and aarf".

When curry entered the eating habits of Cardiffians in the late Fifties, they never managed to give up chips, but being cosmopolitan they added a portion of rice as well with the curry on top, and so created the "aarf and aarf", which remains Cardiff's only contribution to world cuisine," explains Rhodri Morgan, MP for Cardiff West.

Close behind the "aarf and aarf" is the Kairdip pie, a beast of a pastie, served volcanically hot and, some say, best eaten when the senses have been dulled by alcohol.

"On one occasion," says Henny, "the health and safety people took one of the pies and found there was no meat in it. Now most of us had known that for years, but the bloke said he'd done it to save the jobs of his workers as a result of the BSE crisis."

"They're the only meat pies you can't catch BSE off and we love 'em, especially after a pint of Dark Mind you, they've done extensive scientific tests and they still don't know what's in them."

ROGER DOBSON

Where only foreigners wear white macs

An EU summit in Cardiff has made its cabbies smile



big enough to accommodate the comfortably proportioned German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, has been successfully concluded. With that matter out of the way, the focus is now on selling the city.

Frank Hennessy, broadcaster, entertainer and founder of the Cardiff Language Society, says people who see Cardiff for the first time will be shocked. "It's a beautiful city – one of the best in Europe," he enthuses.

Apart from the official sites, such as the revamped docklands and the

Super city animals

Yesterday foxes, today otters, tomorrow peregrine falcons? Daniel Butler on the wild creatures invading our cities

THE NEWS that otters are moving into our cities for the first time in two centuries prompted a euphoric reaction earlier this week. They regularly swim through Southampton, one was seen in a Kidderminster car park, and another has been taking tittibits from workmen in Shrewsbury. Reports from Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle and Edinburgh confirm the pattern, with perhaps the most unusual sighting coming from Sidmouth, where an adult loped down the High Street in broad daylight.

In fact otters are merely the latest in a long line of rural immigrants. Most notable is the urban fox, which began to crop up in numbers during the Sixties, prompting a hysterical reaction from some who predicted that children would be attacked and rabies would run rampant. This was unduly pessimistic, of course, but in other respects the foxes certainly seem to have set a trend, which mirrors mankind's own migration from town to country.

Badgers were the next to attract attention (although most of them were old residents whose presence had previously gone largely unremarked) and since then the list has grown every year. Along with otters, peregrines are the latest high-profile entrants. Thirty years ago the British population of these birds was reeling from the effects of DDT and they were on the verge of dying out. Today there are around 1,200 pairs, each in search of a suitable cliff on which to nest. Indeed, now almost every natural site is occupied and the population pressure is so great that some are turning to man-made alternatives. One pair has already bred on Swansea Post Office Tower, another on a Derbyshire power station, while a third is currently nesting on a block of flats in Brighton. There seems every likelihood that these are just the vanguard.



Urban peregrines are well established in America (albeit from introduced captive-bred stock) where they thrive on the seemingly limitless supplies of feral pigeons. There is no shortage of these in our own cities, along with thousands of potential nest ledges. And, after all, the peregrine's smaller cousin, the kestrel, has not only thrived on motorway verges, but has become a familiar sight in most big towns, while the elusive sparrowhawk is far more common in suburbia than many human inhabitants may realise.

Similarly, until recently the bird guides proclaimed that tawny owls were exclusively woodland dwellers, but now their characteristic "too-wit-oo-woo" can be heard ringing out across Highbury Fields in the heart

of Islington, one of London's most built-up boroughs. Greater spotted woodpeckers and woodpigeons have also made the transition from trees to concrete, not to mention the ubiquitous blue tit which has long since swapped its diet of oak canopy caterpillars for doorstep milk bottles. Cormorants have also chosen to move in from the coast, and now their characteristic, long-necked silhouettes are a common sight around inland lakes, gravel pits and rivers – much to the chagrin of anglers and fish farmers.

It is, of course, relatively easy for birds to wing their way into town, but you might have thought that Tarmac, walls and traffic would deter mammals. Far from it; there are plenty of green corridors into the hearts of

even our largest cities: along railway lines, canals, even sewers.

The water vole is one that has made it. Although it has recently disappeared from two-thirds of its former geographical range, some of its healthiest strongholds are within built-up areas. There are thriving populations in central Sheffield and Twickenham's Crane Park, for example, while a study in Avonmouth revealed increasing numbers.

The voracious American mink, which is the main cause of the vole's general decline, shuns human disturbance, particularly when this comes from people exercising dogs. In addition, it prefers richer habitat than the generally degraded urban areas and so steers clear of cities. In contrast the voles are relatively

at ease in the presence of man, knowing that the safety of their burrows is only a few feet away, and they can eke out a living from even the meagre pickings of a canal bank. As a result, voles living along tow paths and in popular parks have suffered less than most.

The trend is not confined to small mammals, however, with creatures as large as deer being spotted in cities for the first time. Most reports, of course, are from leafier suburbs and concern the dog-sized muntjac and roe, but occasionally much larger examples crop up, such as the sika (a red deer lookalike) spotted bounding through central Leeds.

So what makes normally shy creatures suddenly swap the peace and quiet of the countryside for our

built-up areas? In the case of the otter and the water vole, improved water quality is a partial answer, while population pressure and habitat shortage accounts for the inflow of peregrines and owls. And what of the future? Which of today's unfamiliar creatures will be living alongside our children during the new millennium? Red kites are front-runners. Currently listed as one of our rarest birds, they are likely to be commonplace tomorrow. This large fork-tailed raptor was confined to mid-Wales at the beginning of the century, but numbers have slowly mushroomed, helped by successful introductions to the Chilterns, Northamptonshire and southern Scotland. And the prospect of urban kites now seems a very real possi-

bility. After all, they were once sufficiently common for Shakespeare to warn housewives to guard their washing lest kites steal it for nesting material. Indeed, they are a familiar sight over many Continental cities. Anyone still raising an eyebrow should note that one was seen circling over Reading last week.

Despite this bright backdrop, Isobel Bretherton of the Wildlife Trusts cautions against complacency.

"Although the urban picture is generally encouraging, there's a lot more we could do," she says. "Local authorities ought to be working more closely with wildlife trusts to improve parks as natural habitats, and there's a long way to go before we reverse the insensitive developments of the past."

It's time to restore our Trust ...

The National Trust, set up to preserve the countryside, is accused of being a body for townies. By Duff Hart-Davis

with their arrogant approach," he says. "We feel they've got things completely wrong ... and are not prepared to listen to reasoned argument."

Like many others who have been temporarily alienated, Waley-Cohen and his wife, who live at Crowcombe in Somerset, the spur that goaded them into action was the Trust's ban on stag-hunting over its land in the West Country, and its reneging on the wishes of an important donor, Sir Richard Acland, who expressly stated that he wanted hunting to continue over his land. Since then, however, anger has been fomented by numerous other aggravations, not least a general ban on falconry and the Trust's refusal to allow bonfire beacons to be lit on its properties during the demonstration preceding the countryside march through London on 1 March this year.

"Do you still trust the National Trust?" demands Font's leaflet. "If you have left the National Trust in disgust, please rejoin and let Font know." The aim of the new body is to exert pressure from the inside, and bring the Trust back on to a line of management that shows greater understanding of country issues.

In a few weeks Font has acquired 600 members. In the words of one land agent, "The main concern is that the Trust is now a townie body, run by townies, and the greatest worry is that it has started going against the wishes of donors. I'm a trustee for many estates; several people have said to me, 'If I should die, for God's sake don't let my property go anywhere near the National Trust'."

One of the most outspoken critics is Robert Waley-Cohen, who, "as a gesture of anger", has removed "a significant amount of furniture, by volume and by value" from Upton Court, the country house near Banbury left to the Trust in 1948 by his wife's grandfather, Lord Beaconsfield. "This is a protest to show the Trust that we're extremely displeased

"having to face on a weekly if not daily basis. It is still evident that many of our traditional supporters feel we have abandoned the countryside under pressure of political correctness."

According to Charles Numley, the Trust's chairman, Font has not responded to an overture sent to them from head office three weeks ago. "We've asked them to meet us, to discuss the concerns they have other than fox-hunting, but they don't appear to be interested."

He points out that, with 600,000 acres of land, 565 miles of coastline and 2.5 million members, the Trust has grown into a huge organisation. "A hundred years ago, the whole purpose was to allow the population access to the countryside, and that's exactly what we're doing today. When people say the Trust has lost touch with the countryside, all they mean is that we're doing one or two things some landowners don't like."

Mr Numley has no doubt that the present unrest "all stems from the bitterness caused by the stag-hunting issue". This is certainly true, but the question is, how far has the bitterness spread, and how can it be assuaged? That doughty campaigner Baroness Mallalieu reckons that "the Trust thought the hunting issue would simply go away. Well, it hasn't. It's festering, and getting worse all the time."

Perhaps the most constructive suggestion has come from Clare McLaren-Throckmorton, whose family has lived at Coughton Court, near Alcester, for more than 500 years. The house now belongs to the Trust, but she has a lease of it, and manages it on their behalf.

Although a lifelong supporter, she confesses that she was shaken when the Trust reneged on its agreement with Sir Richard Acland, and she has asked for reassurance that in future donors' wishes will be respected, before she leaves the Trust the contents of Coughton. She also hopes that "big decisions, which have a huge knock-on effect, will be taken much more carefully and after more consultation." Her suggestion is that, because times have changed, the millennium should be the occasion for the Trust to make a fundamental reassessment of its role and principles.

NATURE NOTE

IN THIS warm, wet weather, thousands of gardeners are no doubt being irritated by the proliferation of blackfly in their broad beans; but probably few of them realise what phenomenal powers of reproduction the aphids possess. One female, settling on a beanstalk, can give birth parthenogenetically (without being fertilised by a male) to 50 wingless offspring. Seven days later, each of those 50 is capable of breeding, and in a single year the insects will go through about 18 generations.

Dr Richard Harrington, an entomologist at the Institute for

Arable Crops Research at Rothamsted, has calculated that if they all survived, we would end up with the entire surface of the earth covered by blackfly to a depth of 150 kilometres. Fortunately, a high proportion of the aphids die before they can breed.

There are more than 500 species of aphids in Britain, but last week suction traps in Hertfordshire caught a type hitherto reported only in southern Italy. Global warming? A side-effect of El Niño? For the moment, no one can tell.

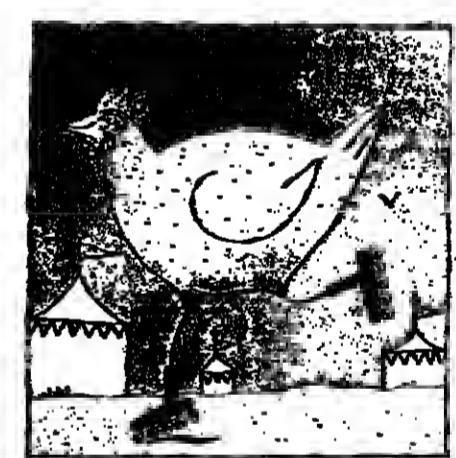
DUFF HART-DAVIS

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEKEND

BADGER-FACE, silver-spangled hamburghs and many more inhabitants of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire will meet next week for the Three Counties Show at Malvern, an annual agricultural show that includes displays of dog agility, ladies' side-saddle riding, sheep-shearing and a pig of the year competition. Abattoir escapees the Tawnyworth Two (Butch and Sundance) will be making guest appearances – and spreading subversion among competitors?

The three Counties Show 1998 is at the Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire, 16-18 June, from 8am. Adults £11, children £5 (01684 554906; www.threecounties.co.uk)

SALLY KUNDIGER



THE INDEPENDENT

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Keeping Eastern promises



Classic and simple - antique furniture at Snap Dragon

WALK DOWN any British high street this summer and you will see just how popular eastern-style home accessories have become. From House of Fraser to Habitat and The Conran Shop, the volume and diversity of eastern goods is striking. If, however, you are looking for something really individual, an item you'll definitely want to keep when the latest trend has been replaced, there is one place that certainly deserves a visit.

Hurrying into Snap Dragon off a rainy summer street in south west London, I feel as if I was stumbling into the shelter of a tropical forest. Solid, chunky tables seemed to emerge from the floor. Like tangled shrubs, ceremonial food boxes and cabbage baskets lolled about the room and, strewn on top of a Chinese day bed, were antique wooden baskets and smooth, dark storage pots. Simple bowls in delicate shades of green looked as if they were curled up like spring leaves and bamboo-carrying baskets hung overhead like a canopy.

There is something intrinsically pleasing about the rich, warm colours, soft textures and smooth, almost glassy, shapes of this furniture, and proprietor Leonie Lee-Whittle has built up a successful business on the premise that many people share this taste. She points out that she only stocks goods that she likes and that the furniture on sale is not representative of all Chinese styles.

That was six years ago and her business has grown enormously. Snap Dragon has been open for al-

Rhiannon Batten
finds a purveyor
of quality
oriental
home accessories

Leonie grew up in Hong Kong where she developed a childhood hobby of rambling through abandoned local villages picking up an old lantern here or a crumbling desk there. These formed the basis of a collection when she later returned to the country as a stockbroker. Becoming dissatisfied with the financial world, she eventually decided to start up her own business - learning about Chinese furniture from museums in Taiwan and California, and spending hours at the V&A.

From time spent in China, meeting people and making contacts, she came to an arrangement with one particular Chinese family. Having explained what she wanted, and how much she was prepared to pay for it, she let them get on with finding the goods for her business while she travelled back and forth, at first selling mainly to the States.

That was six years ago and her business has grown enormously. Snap Dragon has been open for al-

most two years and, keen to maintain direct links with her customers and China, Leonie always likes to talk to her clients - sometimes visiting their homes to get a feel for what they are looking for - before a visit to the East.

The shop's staff are fully briefed in the history of the furniture, and each piece for sale has a little label explaining its background. A set of four screen doors are displayed with a note that lattice-work panels helps the air circulate, even though the doors are dividing up the room. And certainly, from rice buckets to dowry cabinets, narrow console tables to an 18th-century day bed converted into a coffee table, these are useful, practical things.

However, such pieces do come at a price. An antique herbal medicine chest with smudgy ink lettering on each tiny drawer is currently on sale for £1,500, and the lattice-work panels - a set of four - are £3,500.

As well as antiques, pieces can be made or adapted to order. In the shop, shimmering red and gold cushions, silk lampshades and giant yellow incense sticks highlight the aubergine colours and polished surfaces of the antiques. This is a place to come back to again and again - it's not just a passing trend but a shop offering classic simplicity.

Snap Dragon, 247 Fulham Road, London SW3 6HY (0171-376 8889).



Green-lacquered rice buckets from £95

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CLASSIFIED: INDEPENDENT TRADERS

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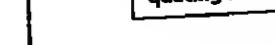
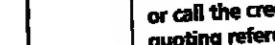
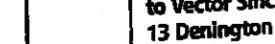
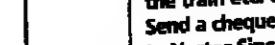
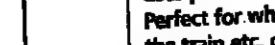
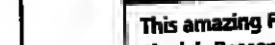
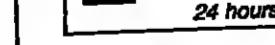
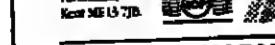
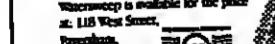
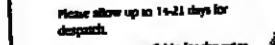
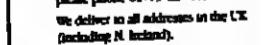
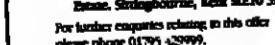
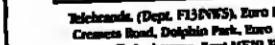
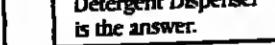
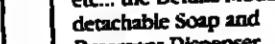
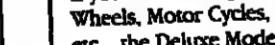
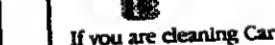
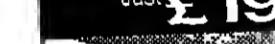
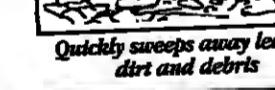
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Ella Doran's colourful designs have given new life to the much maligned coaster and table mat

Coaster to coaster

Table mats have long been icons of tableware naffness, but designer Ella Doran's eye for striking, off-the-wall imagery is transforming them into an essential menu item for any stylish dinner party. By Charlotte Packer

IF YOU believe coasters are irredeemably naff, and you'd rather have your table tops garlanded with wine rings than succumb to the suburban horror of surface protection, then you're a little behind the times. All those awful images of the castles of England, framed in burgundy borders, are long gone in the world of tableware.

The coaster and its equally unhappy cousin, the table mat, have finally come of age, and Ella Doran is the person responsible for their renaissance. Her witty and striking designs, which include photographs of peeling posters on New York buildings and luscious close-ups of lilies and roses, have catapulted table mats onto the pages of the glossy interior and style magazines, and back into our lives.

It is Doran's ability to create powerful images from quirky and unexpected details which has not only revitalised the humble coaster but ensured her success as a designer. Joanna Dodsworth, curator of The Bodleian Library, was so impressed by her eye for the unusual that she commissioned Doran to work on a series of postcards for the Impressions of The Bodleian project. "We asked her to spend a couple of days at the library photographing things that caught her attention, textures and colours, aspects of a book one wouldn't normally think about." Other recent collaborations include a commission for a wall feature for a bar in Farringdon, and a very appropriate link up with Absolut Vodka, for whom she has designed a limited edition set of interlocking coasters featuring the iconic bottle. "I'm very partial to vodka," admits Doran, "so it was a great job."

Having graduated from art school with a degree in printed textiles, Doran imagined her future lay in bed linen, blinds and other soft furnishings. Had anyone suggested that her career would take off with coasters, she would have laughed out loud; in fact, she does laugh out loud - with embarrassment at it all. "It does feel a little odd to admit, when people ask, that I make coasters and table mats for a living."

She is also amused by the fact that she has forged a career based on her photography, a skill she developed initially as a means of gathering inspiration for her textiles. Wherever she travelled her camera went too, and the shots that came back were not the usual tourist snaps of faces and places, but little details that captured the essence of a place or served as *éclairs-mémoires* for future designs.

"It is strange that I am now recognised for these photographs, and yet I'm sure that if I'd trained as a photographer, I wouldn't have come this far." One image of fiery red and yellow leaves arranged

across the bright blue pages of an open notebook has become one of her best selling designs and, in a neat twist, dates back to the six months she spent in Kenya trying to figure out what she wanted to do with her life.

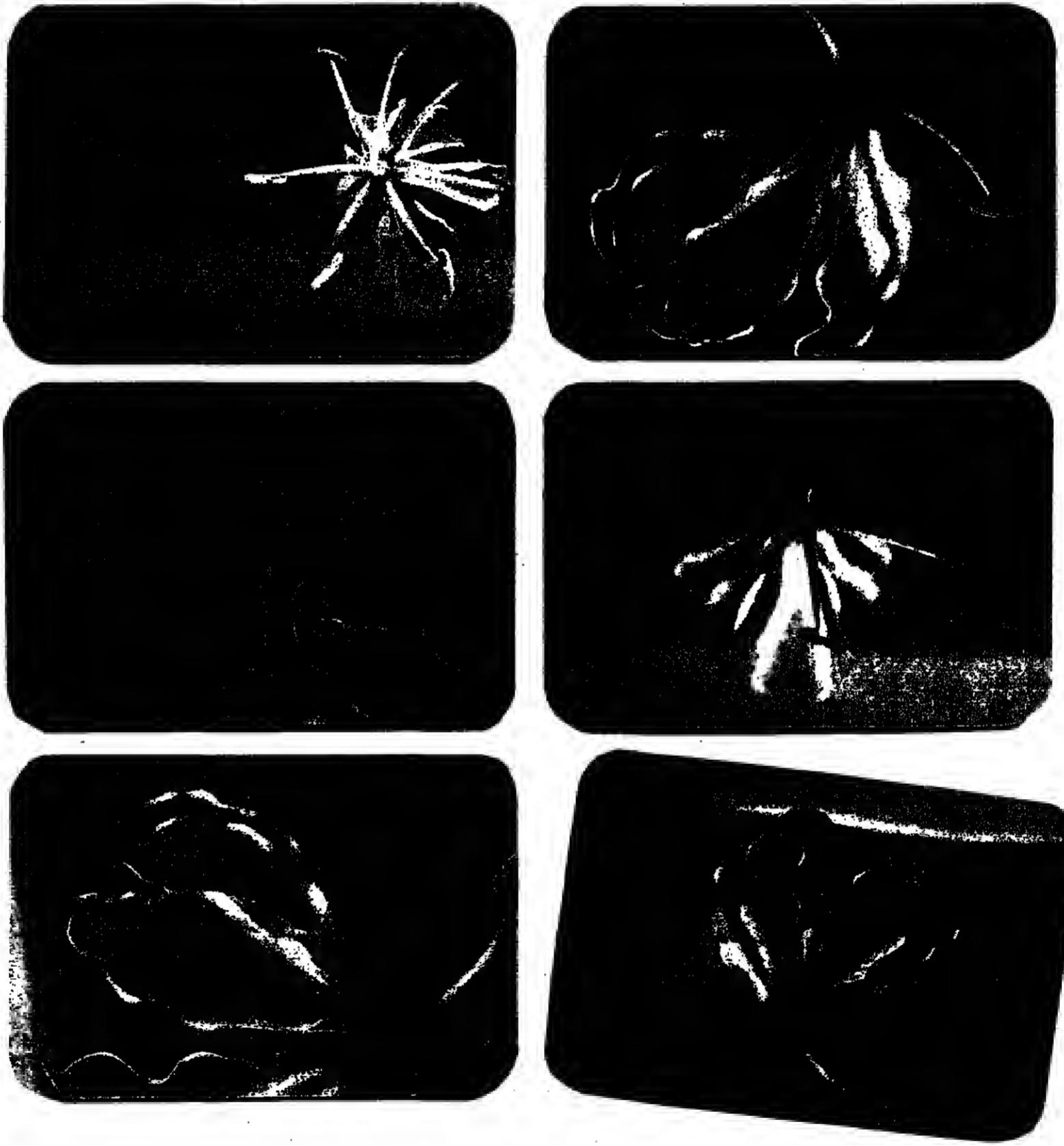
On her return to the UK, Doran held an open studio show with a friend. "I had been making cushions and bed linen, so we created a bedroom scene and called the show *La La Soloma*, which is Swahili for sweet dreams. On a table in a corner, I displayed a few coasters I'd had made up at a photo shop as a joke." The show sold out, everything going, including the coasters.

Following this, Doran drew up her first business plan and applied to The Prince's Youth Business Trust and the East London Business Centre, both of whom came up with cash. "Eighty per cent of that plan was about printed blinds. The coasters were only there because a friend suggested them as a means of generating revenue."

But the demand for her coasters (£19.50 for a set of six, mats £29.50 for six) and later trays (from £20.50) has been such that only now, with two part-time assistants and another couple of outworkers, can she turn her attention to the blinds, the first of which has just arrived in the studio. It's a one-off commission designed for a kitchen, featuring enlarged versions of the seed packets for runner beans and cabbages on her Legume collection of mats. "That's where I really want things to go next," she explains. "Lots of individual projects for interiors. I hope to have a range of designs people can choose from and adapt in whatever way they wish." She has already started production on a china collection, elegant bowl-shaped cups with stripy stones lurking in their depths which are an extension of Stones, a range of coasters bearing photographs of pebbles set against black and white text and her studio floor.

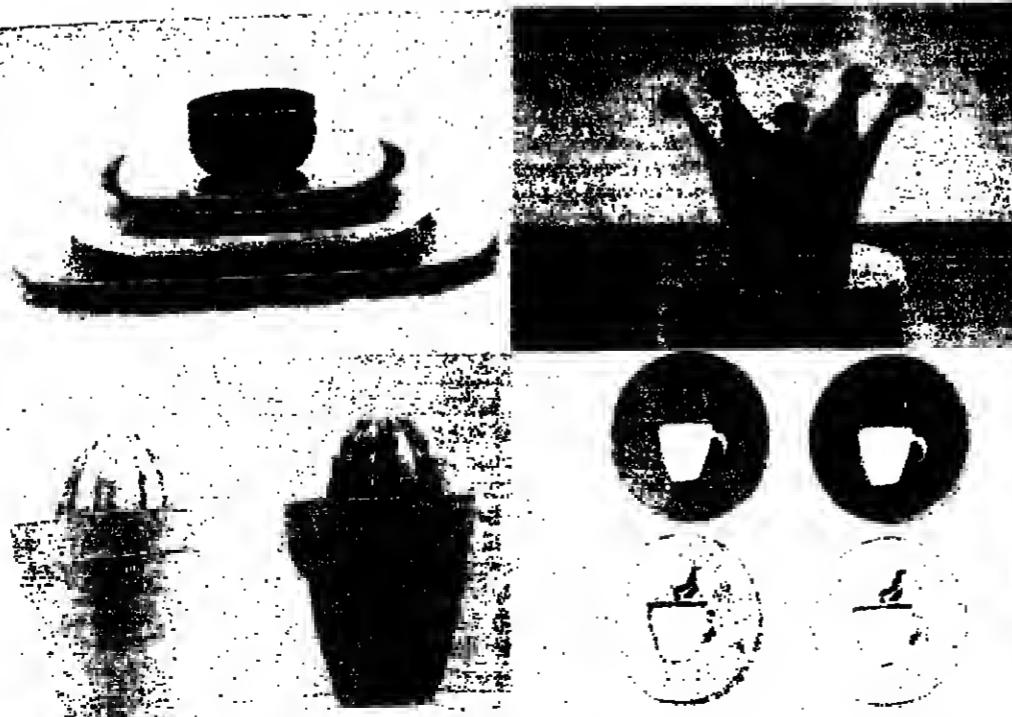
It is now just two and a half years since her first coaster went into production and Doran seems to have conquered the world: her trays are snapped up by design conscious Americans at *Ad Hoc* in New York, and the coasters and mats grace the smartest homes from Notting Hill to Los Angeles and soon, following a frenetic week doing deals with buyers in Tokyo, the Japanese will be sipping their Sapporo with an Ella Doran coaster to hand.

Contact Ella Doran, 1 Tenter Ground, London E1 7NH (0171 375 1466). Her coasters are also available by mail order from Purves & Purves, 80-81 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HD. Call 0171 580 8223. The Bodleian Library 01865 277 216/091 or www.bodle.ox.ac.uk/arcade



ON THE TABLE

This summer retro ceramics, kitsch plastic tumblers and funky plywood coasters will be seen on the best dressed tables



Clockwise from top left:
Feldspar bowl, £1.90, and plates from £1.90, IKEA (phone 0181-208 5607 for nearest store); Egg cup, £2.50 for a set of four Purves & Purves, 80-81 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 9HD (0171-580 8223) mail order; Frosted flower coasters, £2.50 each, The Pier, 0171-614 5004 for mail order and enquiries; Acrylic wave bib, £2.95, and tumblers, £2.50, The Pier, as above; Plywood coasters with coffee cup cut-outs, £3.80 each, Purves & Purves, as above; Cactus juice, £1.00, Purves & Purves as before.

Right: Yellow Delire jug, £15, Habitat, for nearest store, 0645 834433



So farewell then, El Niño

The continent-sized pool of warm water in the Pacific, which has been turning climates upside down, is finally fading away, but nobody knows what will follow it

THE PACIFIC Ocean is finally getting back to normal. That vast pool of warm water known as El Niño has all but faded away, though many parts of the world are still feeling its effects. And in parts of the world where they are not fighting the forest fires that follow El Niño-related drought, or the mudslides that follow El Niño-related storms, they wait in trepidation to see what will happen next.

Sometimes El Niño is followed by his little sister La Niña, which produces more or less the opposite effects. But sometimes El Niño is an only child and the weather systems of the world revert to normal. We just don't know.

The trouble is that the world's weather involves such a complex interaction between air and water currents operating on different time-scales. At the simplest level, we have the sun heating the earth and the earth giving off its heat to warm the air. (There is comparatively little direct heating of the air by the sun - which explains why the tops of mountains are such cold places, even though they are nearer the sun.) Equatorial areas of the earth receive more solar energy than polar areas, which leads to warmer air near the equator and colder at the poles. Warm air rises, cold air descends, and that accounts for one aspect of the continuous winds that circle the earth. The other main aspect is the earth's rotation, which provides a continuous slow-stirring effect.

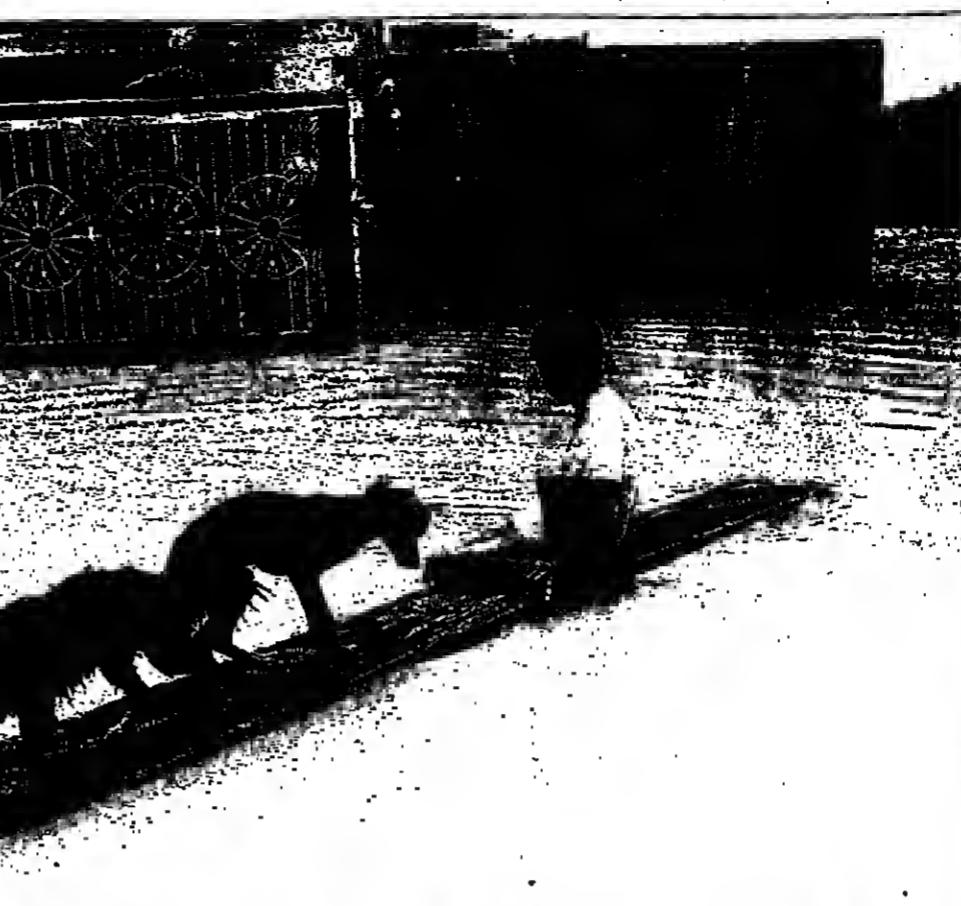
Meanwhile, there is the warming and cooling effect of night and day to take into account, and then there is the problem of the earth taking such a long time to radiate its stored heat.

Have you ever wondered why the shortest day (when we receive the least heat from the sun) is in December, but the coldest day does not generally happen until February? It's because the earth is such a good storage heater. In December, it's still living off the heat it collected in summer. It's only when that is all used up that we feel really cold.

Then - and here we're finally catching up with El Niño again - there is the differential heat storage capacity of the oceans and the land. While the land may retain heat for a month or so, the oceans can do so for twice as long. And they can move it around in a way that the earth cannot.

The winds spread the warmth around at one rate, the earth radiates it at another, and the oceans at a third. No wonder it's all too complicated to predict. And what makes it even worse, is the motion of water in the oceans, not just from one location on

the surface to another, but between different depths. Cold water sinks and warm water rises at a far slower rate than anything we have yet mentioned, and somewhere in all these processes lies the explanation of why, every five years or so, a great pool of warm water gathers unexpectedly in the Pacific and throws the world's weather into turmoil.



Coping with flooding in Indonesia caused by El Niño's torrential rains

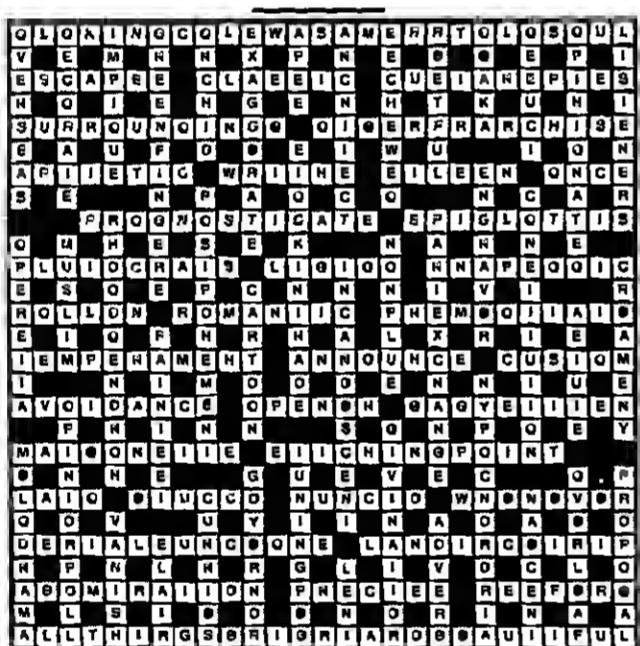
Scott Dalton/AP

And as it passes, the world counts the cost: rebuilding after El Niño will cost Ecuador \$2bn; Peru will spend \$27m just to rebuild highways, bridges, homes and schools destroyed by floods and mud slides; Brazil's grain production has been cut by half, and some 10 million people are expected to go hungry; 10 per cent of Fiji's population will need government aid for up to a year to avert starvation and destitution. The roll of disaster goes on and on: from New Zealand we learn that 90 per cent of chicks of the world's rarest penguin species will starve to death because the El Niño-related drought has led to a scarcity of the penguin's main food source. Washington anticipates an explosion of mosquito numbers: Los Angeles is bracing itself for an invasion of rats and killer bees. All because of El Niño.

Most momentous of all, last month, scientists calculated that at its peak, El Niño was responsible for a slowing of the earth's rotation by 200 microseconds. Well, at least that gives scientists a fraction of a second more to see if they can predict when this climate destroyer will be back again.

GAMES AND JUMBO CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

CONCISE



CHESSE: WILLIAM HARTSTON

THIS WEEKEND I shall be watching the World Cup - the World Chess Cup at the Devonshire Inn in Sticklepath, near Okehampton, Devon. With six years' experience of world-class chess events behind them, including one world team championship contested by local pub teams each representing a different nation, and six Devonshire International Tournaments, the time was ripe, in the opinion of the landlord John Verner-Jeffreys, to host a World Cup.

Considerable crowds are expected this afternoon to see the first appearance of the latest version of Aquarius, the chess computer powered by the water mill at the Finch Foundry next door to the inn. Last year, Aquarius - the world's first intelligent clepsydra - dried out during an unusually sunny spell and by the time it had been reboated, by men in pedaloos ferrying to and fro with buckets of water, it was adjudged to have overstepped the time limit.

This time, however, they believe the upgraded Rainbows 88 weather system is truly weatherproof. "It has a 4.3 gigaballon, 8-speed parallel aqueduct Reservoir Added Memory," Mr Verner-Jeffreys explained, "with a sheep-methane-powered gas turbine back-up in case of drought."

The break-through in design occurred, he said, when research revealed that 95 per cent of the methane produced by a sheep came from belches. "We'd been using the wrong disc-drive, as it were," he said.

If the weather forecast for this weekend is correct, sheep-power will be unnecessary, but a flock is on standby if necessary. And what, I asked, if it gets clogged up with water spiders and dragonflies as it did in 1996? "No problem," said Mr Verner-Jeffreys with a knowing wink as he pointed to the fine metal grid sunk deep into the water. "Millennium hug-filter."

And if you think that sounds a little far-fetched, here's a game from an equally futuristic contest, currently being played in Leon, Spain. Each man has an hour for all his moves, but may call on the assistance of either of two top-of-the-range computer programs. Kasparov lost the first game, but in the second adopted the sort of chess that computers don't understand. At the end, White's threat of 37.Rc7 cannot satisfactorily be met.

White: Garry Kasparov
Black: Veselin Topalov
Leon 1998

1 d4 Nf6 19 Rfc1 Qa5

2 Nf3 g6 20 a3 a6

3 c4 Bg7 21 Bd4 Bb6

4 g3 0-0 22 e3 Bb8

5 Bg2 c6 23 Qd2 Qd8

6 Nc3 d5 24 Bf1 Rcf7

7 cxd5 cxd5 25 Qb2 Rcf6

8 Nf5 e6 26 Nfd4 Rxc1

9 0-0 Nfd7 27 Rxc1 Bc6

10 f4 Nc5 28 Nc5 Qe8

11 Be3 f5 29 a3 a5

12 Nf3 f5 30 Qc3 Qf7

13 Nf5 Nb6 31 Bb5 Bxd5

14 B3 Bd7 32 a6 b6

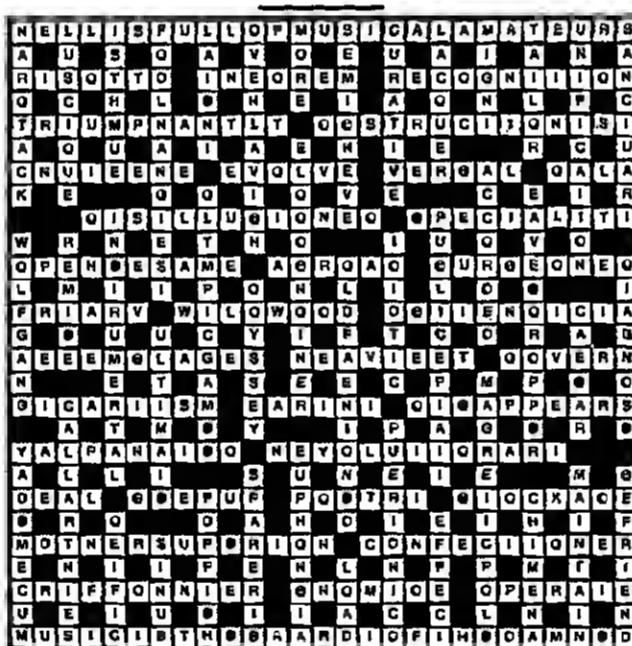
15 Qd3 Nc8 33 Nfd4 Bc3

16 Bc1 Nxe5 34 Qxc8+ Rxc8

17 dxe5 Rf7 35 Rxc8+ Kb7

18 Be3 Bc6 36 b6 resigns

CRYPTIC



Winners

Cryptic winner:
M Hartley, Blackburn;

Cryptic runners-up:
A Whibley, London E3;
M Wane, Windermere;
M Hastilow, London SE10;
D Bateman, Colchester;
H Ougham, Aberystwyth.

Concise winner:
G Speake, Combe.

Concise runners-up:
D Martin, Witham;
P Harmer, London NW7;
D Hiles, Easingwold;
C Harding, London NW3;
F Buckingham, London SW6.

Raymond Blanc, 48, patron, Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons restaurant.

MY FREE time is a bit of a luxury, but one thing that I still do, is play tennis. I must say I've got a most wondrous style. I'm all made of style, as I had one of the very best teachers. My service is definitely... well, look at me, you say: "Wow, he's quite something, that guy". And of course you see the ball travelling at 25 miles an hour. OK maybe into the net, and yet I remain to be the champion of *Le Manoir* in the inter-staff competition every year.

They know that as a Frenchman, and the boss, I cannot contemplate losing, so for the last ten years, apart from last year, I've won, because nobody dares to win against me for fear of retribution.

In 1997, one very unruly individual, bald and so on, completely smashed me. I lost the cup of *Le Manoir*, and I'm not any more the champion, isn't it terrible?

So I'm going to practise hard this summer, while given time. That is really one

of my favourite games, because it's so easy to jump into a court and take a couple of hours to have fun.

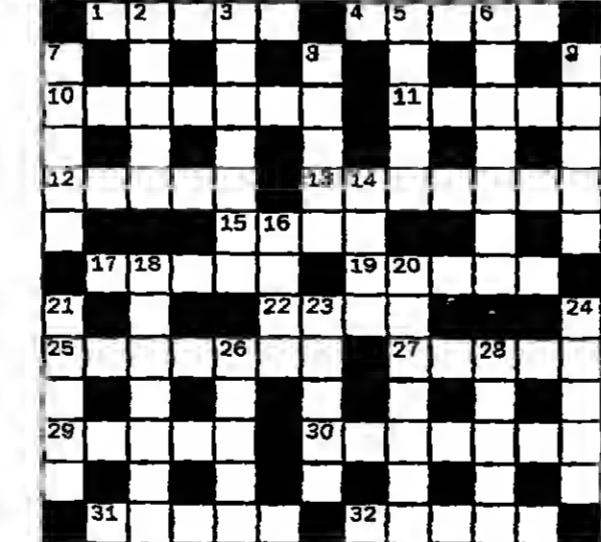
One game I've discovered lately is *Loosey's Quest*. You go into caves and you have a gun, and a harness, which shows where you've been hit. Obviously I'm a pretty lousy shot. I discovered that when my son completely killed me about ten times over.

My other game is a leisurely game. French play: *Pétanque*. Again we have a concours every year, and I usually do find I reach the final. It is a lovely game because of the pastis and the *Ricard*. It is very much of the south of France, and of course you get slightly drunk, but who cares?

Le Manoir has, thanks to recent renovations, now been transformed into a window of contemporary style. Bookings: 01944 278881 - or you may prefer to recreate its gastronomic splendour at home in autumn, when *Blanc Vite* will be published by Headline.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3636 Saturday 13 June



ACROSS

- 1 Pretend (5)
- 4 Brownish-grey colour (5)
- 10 Give shelter to (7)
- 11 Cancel (5)
- 12 Italian city (5)
- 13 Unpleasantly (7)
- 15 Exhibit (4)
- 17 Incline (5)
- 19 Express a view (5)
- 22 Form of rash (4)
- 25 Come uninvited (7)
- 27 Own up to (5)
- 29 Deserve (5)
- 30 Whip (7)
- 31 Answer charge in court (5)
- 32 Special ability (5)

DOWN

- 2 Mistake (5)
- 3 Adult (5-2)
- 5 Gather (5)
- 6 Regular payment to retired person (7)
- 7 First mover in chess (5)
- 8 Incorrect (5)
- 9 Dramatic pieces (5)
- 14 Long period (4)
- 16 Understood (4)
- 18 Prospect (7)
- 20 Bird (7)
- 21 Greek letter (5)
- 23 Slop (5)
- 24 Aquatic animal (5)
- 26 Right-wing extremist (5)
- 28 Wall painting (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 5 Jewel, 8 Purpose (Dual-purpose), 9 Space, 10 Rat-free, 11 Trap, 14 Add, 16 Affair, 17 Abused, 18 Man, 20 Lease, 24 A la carte, 25 State, 26 Sarcasm, 27 Idiom. DOWN: 1 Opera, 2 Crane, 3 Confy, 4 Ascend, 6 Emporium, 7 Encamped, 12 Affected, 13 Falsotto, 14 Arm, 15 Dan, 19 Alcots, 21 Scrap, 22 Crate, 23 Beryl.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

East-West game; dealer East
North
♦J 10 7 4
♥A 7
♦K Q 10 7
♦A J 5
West
♦8 5
♥10 6 2
♦9 8 6
♦Q 10 9 8 4
East
♦9 2
♥K Q 14 3
♦A 4 3
♦K 2
South
♦A K Q 6 3
♥9 8 5
♦5 2
♦7 6 3

FIRST of all I shall describe how South went down in his spade game on this deal and then invite you to find three other lines of play that would have succeeded.

East opened One Heart, South over-called with One Spade and, after West had passed, North bid Two Hearts - the so-called "unassuming cue-bid". He had a lot in reserve, of course, and when South showed a minimum with Two Spades, he went on to game.

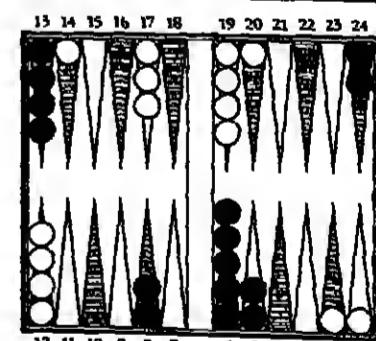
West led ♦2 against Four Spades and declarer won the second round. He came to hand with a trump and led a diamond to the king and ace. East returned a trump and, after ruffing his third heart, South played off two more rounds of trumps, then looked for a second trick in diamonds by leading low to the queen and ruffing ♦7. The jack did not fall and that left South a trick short.

And the more successful lines? (1) Finessing ♦10 instead of trying to ruff out the jack. The finesse loses, but ♦Q 7 now provides two club discards when the nine falls. (2) Play ♦Q on the second round of the suit, but follow with ♦10 to pin West's now bare nine. (3)

Perhaps the most elegant - on winning East's trump return, cash ♦A, ruff a diamond, ruff a heart, cash ♦A, and ruff the last diamond.

This leaves dummy with ♦J ♦J, and declarer with ♦Q ♦J, and now, however, the defenders manage the suit, an exit with a low club gives South two of the last three tricks.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



WE LEFT our game last week with White (Frank Frigo) to play 22 in the position above. Despite the attractions of making the 4-pt, White should not leave a blot on his 5-pt. Thus three of the 2s should be played 11/9/7/5. The final 2 is best played 23/21, seeking to establish a good anchor in Black's board. Frigo, however, chose 13/11.

Black (Peter Thomsen) rolled 62 and played 13/5. While this may look nice and leave no blot, it does nothing to improve his position. He should try 24/16. Although this leaves White a lot of shots he will not always hit and if Black can escape a man he will have significantly improved his position.

White rolled 42 and made his 4-point with 8/4, 6/4. Black rolled 62 again and now correctly ran out with 7/5. The problem is that this time White's board is much stronger and a hit much more dangerous. White rolled 64 and played 24/18, 13/9*. Note that he could have played 11/5 with the 6 but that is the wrong idea. White wants to use that man to make the bar-point if possible. Also, when advancing a man from your opponent's home board, it is usually less risky when he is on the bar.

Black now rolled 55 and stayed on the bar. Frigo promptly doubled and Thomsen just as quickly passed. This is an excellent early game double. White has the better board and one of Black's men on the bar. He has a variety of winning game plans. Black, despite having made his own 5-point, must pass this one. The risk of losing a gammon is high and he has no real threats.

Even in this seven move game there were a lot of difficult playing decisions. It is the ability to make right choices consistently in these early and middle game positions which separates the great players from the merely good ones.

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TRAVEL

Bronze Age revisited



The sculptor Henry Moore was born 100 years ago. His centenary is being marked in the quiet Hertfordshire village where he lived.

By Martin Thompson

JOYTERRING THROUGH Perry Green, near Bishops Stortford, you could easily miss it. Tucked away behind the manicured village green is the lair of the late Henry Moore, the gentle giant of British 20th-century art, born a century ago to a miner's family in Castleford, Yorkshire. The rugged Yorkshire landscape may have inspired much of his art, yet it was in the cosy farmlands of the Home Counties that Moore elected to spend a great deal of his working life.

Although it does not trumpet its existence, Henry Moore's southern fiefdom is open to visitors under the auspices of a charitable foundation set up by the artist himself in his final years. Visitor numbers have increased every year, but for art lovers and the simply curious, Perry Green remains one of southern England's best kept secrets.

The Henry Moore Foundation is based round the 15th-century house and 70 acres of grounds where the sculptor lived and worked for four decades with his Russian wife Irina. The house is not open to the public, but visitors to the estate can see Moore's workshops and gardens with a special display of 29 sculptures. The layout of the estate has been kept much as it was during the artist's lifetime. Yet this is no passive memorial. Two of Moore's assistants are still working away repairing vandalised public commissions, and preparing other pieces for exhibitions the world over.

In an age before artists became self-publicists, Moore remained a modest, enigmatic figure beavering away quietly behind the ancient Hertfordshire hedgerows. Today, such an atmosphere is retained by allowing the public to view Moore's house and works while honouring his sense of privacy. Ninety-minute tours of the stu-

dios and grounds give a fascinating insight into the artist's ideas and working methods. These tours are available by appointment between April and mid-October. However, to celebrate the sculptor's centenary year, the foundation is holding an open day on Saturday 20 June. A Yorkshire brass band will disturb the peace with impunity, while visitors will be able to wander through the gardens and studios without booking.

If you elect, as I did, to book a guided tour, you will find that the foundation has honed the visitor experience to a fine art. I joined a mostly elderly group whose agility was easily a match for the two A-level art students in tow. Groups are kept small (15), with plenty of informal interaction encouraged by the volunteer guides.

We began our tour with Moore's finished pieces in the gardens, then traced his great themes such as 'mother and child' back to their genesis as ideas-cum-small-maquettes, now on display in Moore's studios.

"Gardening is Irina's sculpture," Moore remarked of his wife's great contribution to Perry Green. There are no formal flowerbeds, only areas of lawn surrounded by banks of hornbeam, ash and willow, providing a backdrop for the un-

Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich (01603 593199), *Friendships and Influences*, 13 October-13 December. Here you can see how much Epstein and Brancusi inspired Moore, and note the

MORE MOORE

EXHIBITIONS TO CELEBRATE THE SCULPTOR'S CENTENARY

British Museum (0171-636 1555): until 30 September. Moore's *King and Queen*, 1952-53, on loan from the Tate Gallery, can be seen along with a small group of bronze and plaster maquettes in the original display cases that he used in the Twenties, juxtaposed with ancient relics.

Wakefield Art Gallery (01924 305904). *Photographs by Henry Moore*, 1 August-13 September. This explores Moore's use of photography in developing his major works and working out the "to scale" pieces in the landscape.

Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich (01603 593199), *Friendships and Influences*, 13 October-13 December. Here you can see how much Epstein and Brancusi inspired Moore, and note the

effects on the sculptor of his friendship with Sir Robert Sainsbury, as well as the special influence of Pre-Columbian artefacts.

National Touring Exhibition from the Hayward, *Henry Moore in Perspective*. On display will be 46 maquettes, six working models and 25 graphics, which are divided into seven groups representing key subjects and periods in Moore's career. Exhibitions will be held at: Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Nottingham (0115-915 3700); 6-19 July; Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery (0117-922 3571), 25 July-6 September; University of Northumbria, Newcastle (0191-227 4424), 12 September-25 October; Art Gallery and Museum, Brighton (01273 292850), 31 October-10 January.

CHERYL WINSPEAR

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لماذا من الأفضل

Upgrade? It's a con

WHETHER YOU order s pizza or a piano, you expect the supplier to deliver more or less what you requested. But in the case of car rental in America, what you ask for is rarely what you get.

The story so far: last month I pre-booked an economy-class car in Florida. At the rental depot, I was put under pressure to upgrade to a bigger model. I resisted, and was given a larger car anyway, because there was not a single small car to be found anywhere on the rental lot.

A fortnight ago, some readers revealed how free upgrades can virtually be guaranteed so long as you don't succumb to the salesperson's spiel. But not everyone has been so fortunate. Professor Anthony North of Leeds, for example. He, like me, had pre-booked an economy-class car before flying to America.

"I presented the voucher at the crowded Hertz desk at Washington International airport and, having settled various details about insurance, I was presented with an agreement. I did not read it through and presumed that the places where I signed related to the matters I had agreed to. The car was a larger size than I had expected. I supposed that they had given me a larger car because they did not have one of the size ordered. When we arrived at our hotel and I read the agreement, I discovered that I had signed to accept an upgrade for a substantially higher charge. I had neither asked for nor been offered an upgrade."

Eventually a helpful rental clerk at the Hertz office in central Washington solved the problem by tearing up the agreement and replacing it with a new, cheaper one, while letting the Nordics keep the same car.

The word "upgrade" was mentioned frequently when Geraldine Blake of west London arrived at Sanford in Florida to pick up her car.

"The woman at Dollar who dealt with me was most insistent that I needed a larger car, saying that as a woman travelling on my own it would be dangerous in a small car, particularly where my luggage would be on view. I told her that I would take my chances, and so with very bad grace she handed over the keys."

When Ms Blake reached the car, she was astonished. It was huge. "I really enjoyed my two weeks in Florida, but I deeply resent initially being made to feel nervous because someone wanted to make an extra buck."

ALL OF US who use trains, not to mention buses and bicycles, are getting nervous about John Prescott's White Paper on transport - whose publication has been postponed more frequently than a Virgin train. Anyone hoping for a shift towards less destructive forms of travel may be disappointed, judging by the way existing facilities are treated so risibly.

On the first working day of National Bike Week, one of the few cycle lanes in the London borough of Tower Hamlets was blocked by a council van while the driver went shopping.



SIMON CALDER

'The woman who dealt with me was most insistent that I needed a larger car'

ANYONE IN Brighton on the Sunday of the last Bank Holiday weekend would have found the place packed with visitors taking advantage of the sunshine and the extraordinary "Anywhere for £1" deal offered by Thameslink Trains. The bargain resulted in huge homebound crowds at the station and left thousands stranded for the night. Leslie K Robinson sensibly left his home in the Sussex town on the day and used the deal to go walking in the Weald, but believes Thameslink deserves some praise:

"This was a brave experiment which in some ways was a spectacular success. The crowds of football supporters pouring into Brighton during the morning was a sight for sore eyes: kids in prams, mums, dads, grannies. Loads of people who probably hadn't been on a train for ages. Someone on the local BBC radio station commented that they only had to go to Disneyland to see how to manage queues."

Will Thameslink repeat the exercise?

"It's certainly something we'll consider again," says the company's Martin Walker - which will be good news for local charities, which stand to earn all the ticket money, totalling around £30,000 for the day.

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Brian Harris
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The brightly painted houses and colonial Spanish forts of Puerto Plata (below), combine with coastlines little changed since the days of Columbus

John Miller

Fantasy flight to merengue land

A holiday in the Caribbean for the same price as crossing the channel? Claire Gervat jumps on a last-minute flight to the Dominican Republic and discovers a winning destination

IT DIDN'T seem possible: 'Dominican Republic, £99'. Someone's finger had obviously slipped when they typed the information on to the web page. But the next day, and the next, it was still there: a return flight to the Caribbean for six nights, leaving that weekend, for little more than a round trip to Paris. The only catch seemed to be that you flew out of Gatwick and returned to Birmingham, but as far as I was concerned, that wasn't a problem. A quick check in the guidebook showed that there were plenty of reasonably priced hotels in the republic. I rang the agent back and bought a ticket.

To some people, the idea of leaving a holiday booking to the last minute is unthinkable. If you have children at school, it's almost impossible. But, if you're able to travel outside the peak months of July and August and are flexible about where you go, there are some superb bargains to be had. And with the World Cup taking over daily life for the next few weeks, you may already feel that if football really is coming home, you're getting on the first plane away. Cynical friends of mine have suggested that if a holiday or flight hasn't sold, it's because there's something wrong with it. That hasn't been my experience in the past, and it wasn't the case this time, either. The plane took off on time; I had three seats to myself; the Airtours cabin staff were charming and efficient and the food was bearable.

There were more surprises in store. When we landed at Puerto

Plata nearly 10 hours later, one of the reps marched up with her clipboard to ask where I was staying. 'I'm flight only,' I said. Yes, she replied, but that included the first night's accommodation in an all-inclusive resort in nearby Playa Dorada, and I was on coach A2.

The bus journey gave another rep the chance to introduce us to a few facts about our destination, but in my jet-lagged haze the only thing I picked up was that the Dominican Republic wasn't England. This should have been obvious, as the sun was shining and it was early summer.

The resort hotel, in a resort of



After Santo Domingo, I headed north to Santiago, the republic's second city. It's not a tourist spot just a pleasant Dominican city in the mountains with a cathedral that's been destroyed and rebuilt so often that they've almost lost count. It's one of those places you just want to wander round, admiring the little brightly painted wooden houses and stopping off for a glass of passion-fruit juice from time to time.

The Hotel Mercedes would, in estate agent talk, have suited a DIY enthusiast, but it was clean and cheap, and it had a delicious, crumbly charm. In the street outside, men sat around smoking locally made cigars and half-heartedly selling LPs with faded covers by dimly remembered American singers.

Back in Puerto Plata, I checked

into the Atlantico, a small pink guest house, and went off to explore. house owners were determined to give me a send-off to remember. One came the beers, on went the music. I learnt to dance the merengue, the national dance, and when I started to look weak with hunger, they sent to the takeaway for grilled chicken with pineapple vinegar sauce.

Back in the resort hotels, people

would have been watching some

slick entertainment and eating their

buffet dinner.

I think I know who had the bet-

ter deal.

TRAVEL FACTS

Getting there: The best way to travel to the Dominican Republic from the UK is on a charter flight; scheduled services are indirect and expensive. Numerous tour operators offer charters, either as seat only or as part of a package holiday. These include Airtours (051 500479); First Choice (0161 745 7000); Thomson (0990 502580).

Getting in: British visitors must pay \$10 to Immigration on arrival.

More information: Dominican Republic Tourist Board, 40 Crawford Street, London W1H 2BB (0171-723 0097)

Amber is mined in nearby Los

Haitises, and the museum devoted to the subject in Puerto Plata is tiny but beautifully arranged, each piece backlit to show off its captive insect or plant. It's also the town's only real 'tourist attraction', but there are ice-cream parlours and cafés where time slides away pleasantly, and if you go to the green-and-white bar by the bus station, they run a useful side business mending phones.

From Puerto Plata, I made a day trip east by bus along the north coast to Rio San Juan and its Gri-Gri lagoon. It was early when I arrived, about 8am, so I hired a boat and driver to myself and we headed out through the mangroves. Above our heads there were vultures and ibises squawking and flapping in their nests, almost drowning out the sound of the boat's motor. The smell of damp greenery filled my nostrils.

Then suddenly we were at the mouth of the river, and chugging gently past tiny, sandy bays, along a coastline that can hardly have changed since Columbus's day.

Afterwards I stopped for a papaya milkshake in the bar by the boat stand. Outside, two car stereos were competing, with Bob Marley just about winning through. Strangely, it was the only time I heard non-Latin music in a public place. Maybe there's an unwritten rule that everyone has to hear 'Jamming in the Name of the Lord' at least once on any holiday.

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White knuckles, red river

The adrenaline rush is what rafters are after. And on Canada's Rivière Rouge they certainly find it. Cleo Paskal climbed into a kayak for a terrifying ride over the rapids

LET'S CLEAR two things up right away first: the Rivière Rouge is not, I repeat, not, named for the colour it becomes after an unsuccessful white-water rafting trip. And second, for some reason, river guides don't think that is a funny joke. Sadly it was the best I could come up with as my eight-person rubber raft plunged into the churning vortex of a rapid charmingly dubbed "Steep Throat".

Had I spent more time paddling

and less time bantering, we might

not have lost one of our crew mem-

bers (Emma, an enthusiastic but un-

lucky 15-year-old on a school trip) on

the very first stretch of white water:

Live and learn. Hopefully.

On it's really all quite safe, of

course. Before you are let anywhere

near the water, you are equipped

with a helmet and lifejacket and go

through a safety drill. Guides assess

the river each day to decide which

rapids are safe to run and which are

better left to next time.

Emma was retrieved, contentedly

bobbing downstream, by one of the

rafters who follow the rafts in

order to pickup "swimmers", and re-

turned to us safe and sound (and

soaked). She trilled out her story, re-

living every nanosecond of her

white-water baptism to the admiring

gaps of her school chums. As we

paddled through the post-rapid

calm waters I even found myself

vaguely envying Emma and her

"swim".

That all changed as soon as we

got to the next rapid.

Something primordial kicks in

when a human being is faced with

a surging, convulsive, aquatic pit.

The world contracts to you and the

patch of rubber that is keeping you

from a certain watery grave. Time

slows down. Directions are con-

fused. You forget to paddle. You be-

come alone with your terror.

And then it's all over and you go

back to envying the swimmers who

got to experience it all at even

closer hand. Not that it ever occurs

red to you to jump out and join them.

That cycle: terror, adrenaline

rush, calm is what white-water

rafting is all about. Some spots,

such as the dreaded Zambezi, offer

more terror. Others, such as the

gurgling canyons of Oregon, give a

consistent, low-level adrenaline

rush.

The Rouge's speciality is that,



when not plummeting to your doom, you float gently through some of the loveliest countryside Canada has to offer.

Rolling wooded hills hug both shores. Water-worn granite boulders stand like Henry Moore sculptures at the water's edge. The underbrush rustles with wildlife.

I had a chance to appreciate the area's beauty from non-bucking ground when the raft stopped for

lunch on the beach. Away from Emma and her coven, there was no sound but for the drone of the water and the piping of the birds. Around a bend in the river, I saw my first non-rafting person, a fly-fisherman casting from a low-lying boulder into the fast-moving current.

I clambered over the rocks and asked the man what he was fishing for. "Trout," he said, not pausing to

take a break from his physical mantra: cast, pause, reel; cast, pause, reel.

Between casts, the man, a grizzled river rat called Cal, told me a bit about the Rouge. He had lived beside the river for years. Cast, pause, reel. No, there was no official history of the region; all the stories were handed from the old-timers to the newcomers. Cast, pause, reel. According to what he'd

heard, the Europeans first settled the area when Napoleon blockaded the Balkans, cutting off the supply of wood for ships' masts. Cast, pause, reel. That combined with starvation in Ireland and Scotland, led to Scots and Irish being sent over to log the Rouge. Cast, pause, reel. Many of them are still here. Cal himself had heard Gaelic at a regional baseball game. Cast, pause, reel. There had been

log drives down the river that were so thick, you couldn't see the water for kilometres. Cal had seen pictures. Cast, pause, reel. Logging stopped around '68 because so many men were getting killed on the river. No, that's not why they call it the Rouge. Cast, pause, reel.

Up river, I could hear the guides calling for us to return to our boats. I asked Cal one last question. "You ever catch anything?"



Green and secret haunts of Ontario

Get off the tourist trail in southern Ontario, and find a wealth of interest in the landscape and history of Georgian Bay. By Margaret Campbell

THE NIAGARA Falls are breathtaking – and surrounded by throngs of tourists. Toronto is cosmopolitan, fast-paced – and in summer so humid and hot that you scamper for relief from one air-conditioned building to another. For a different view of southern Ontario, do, and head north to the area around Georgian Bay, known as "cotage country".

City-dwellers flock to this region for their holidays, and you don't have to travel far to understand why. Wide open skies form a canvas for spectacular sunsets; rolling fields and agricultural land give way to woods, rivers and lakes, the spacious and rugged setting for provincial and national parks – all easily accessible from Toronto in a rented car.

Georgian Bay itself is on the south-eastern shore of Lake Huron, bordered by the Bruce Peninsula and the regions of Huronia and Muskoka. The whole area was a key inspiration for the Group of Seven: not economically muscular nations, but a band of pioneering artists who worked at the beginning of the century to bring fresh expression to the Canadian landscape.

Wasaga Beach is the closest resort to Toronto, with a beach

that runs for nine miles. You could stay here, and settle for one of the many cottages and camping areas along the lake shore. But more distant towns such as Owen's Sound and Port Elgin are worth the extra travelling time, and the journey through constantly changing countryside is a treat in itself.

I travelled in the area between Barrie, on the edge of Lake Simcoe, and "the Bruce" during the Victoria Day weekend in May. One road sign announced "Welcome Home Heidi". As high summer takes hold, you can go canoeing, swimming and fishing. Or wait for the beautiful foliage display in autumn, or go skiing in the Blue Mountain resorts near Collingwood and in Horseshoe Valley. Age is no barrier – a lady in Shelburne proudly informed us that she had learnt to ski at the age of 62.

There are constant reminders of the region's varied culture and history, not least in the place names: Penetanguishene, Tobermory, Wasaga Beach, Hanover. The immigrant past is remembered in pioneer graveyards at the side of main roads, gravestones collected from old farmsteads and arranged in tidy little squares or semicircles – and in murals such as the one in Durham

commemorating Archibald Hunter, founder of the town's first school and church.

Museums and festivals pay tribute to this history, covering the Native American past and more recent settlers. A rich musical tradition is reflected in the annual fiddlers' contest in Shelburne, a music festival in Owen's Sound and an annual banjo contest in Durham.

For more active recreation,

you can go scuba diving around

the Bruce Peninsula (equipment

can be hired in Tobermory),

hike along the steep cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment, swim, go boating to Flowerpot Island.

There is so much to look out for, even before reaching the Bay: the contrast between the white picket fences and verandas and the rustic wooden fences in the countryside; mailboxes at the end of driveways, carefully crafted and representing miniature tractors, ducks and houses; garage sales selling off pickling jars, old ice-skates and entire record collections; and the road signs: "Asparagus for sale", "Dirt - \$10, \$30, 30 days" and "Live worms and spawn - \$2 a dozen".

More appealing purchases can be made from produce and bakery sales at the end of farm roads, where you may find

members of a community that rejects many aspects of modern life but whose traditional needlework and baking skills are much in demand from town dwellers. Their beautifully crafted quilts and dolls are sometimes available from weekend markets.

The area is dotted with small towns, so there are plenty of places to stop off and eat. Many towns have an area for barbecues: bring your own food and charcoal, and enjoy alfresco meals the North American way.

The closest airport is Toronto, served by daily scheduled flights from Heathrow (Air Canada/British Airways), Birmingham (BA), Glasgow (AC) and Manchester (AC). In June you can pay around £350 through discount agents, in July and August £500. Charters from various UK airports are available. Margaret Campbell paid £225 return on Canada 3000 from Gatwick, through Canadian Airfix (0171-385 4400).

Accommodation choices include camping grounds, motels and cottage rental. For further information on south Ontario, including accommodation, try the Ontario Ministry of Tourism's web site at <http://www.travelontario.com/>

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Get off the tourist trail in southern Ontario, and find a wealth of interest in the landscape and history of Georgian Bay. By Margaret Campbell

Taking the plunge down the 'Steep Throat' rapids of the River Rouge near Montreal Ardea London Ltd

"Oh yeah, of course, all the time. Why do you ask?" Cast, pause, reel. "Ex, no reason."

I returned to the beach. We got back into our rafts and paddled downstream, past Cal's graceful, fruitless casts and on towards the resumption of our own cycle.

Enough calm; we were due for some terror. I spent the rest of the day trying not to follow the perpetually disappearing Emma out of the boat.

I never did find out why the river is called the "Rouge". I bef Cal, still standing out on his rock, a monument to all the old-timers' knowledge, (except where the best trout holes are), knows.

British Airways and Air Canada fly between London, Heathrow and Montreal.

The Rouge is half-way between Ottawa and Montreal, around an hour's drive from both. A variety of companies offer rafting on the Rouge. They all pretty much charge the same price, around £25-£35 for a full day of rafting, including a beach-side lunch and a steak dinner. They provide all the equipment. The season extends into the autumn.

Some companies offer other adrenaline-producing diversions as well, such as white-water kayaking lessons, paintball, mountain biking and rock-climbing. Most have free camping-grounds for their clients. It is a great area to unwind for a few days, if not an ideal trout-fishing river.

You need not make a reservation much in advance, so you can call and book once you arrive in Canada. I rafted with Adventures En Eau Vive, £25, and camped on their grounds free. Telephone numbers: Adventures En Eau Vive telephone in Canada: 1 800 567-6831 or direct from the UK: 0191 242-6084; New World 1 800 361-5033 or 001 1819 242-2168; Propulsion 1 800 461-3200 or 001 1819 229-6620; W3 1 888 RAFTING or 001 1819 242-6571.

Visit Canada Centre, 62-65 Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DY (0891 715000, a premium-rate number).

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Oil boom meets Viking tradition

Norway's ancient city of Stavanger is enjoying a new prosperity, thanks to the North Sea. By Hugh O'Shaughnessy

WHEN NORWAY was a comparatively poor country in relation to the prosperous Scandinavian neighbours who often patronised it, every Norwegian, it was said, nursed the impossible dream of owning a Mercedes with a Swedish chauffeur. Now the standard of living is so high in Norway because of its fantastic North Sea oil boom, that thousands of Norwegians must be able to turn that dream into reality. But, thankfully, they haven't and they continue, it seems, to behave with the understated dignity that has long been their characteristic.

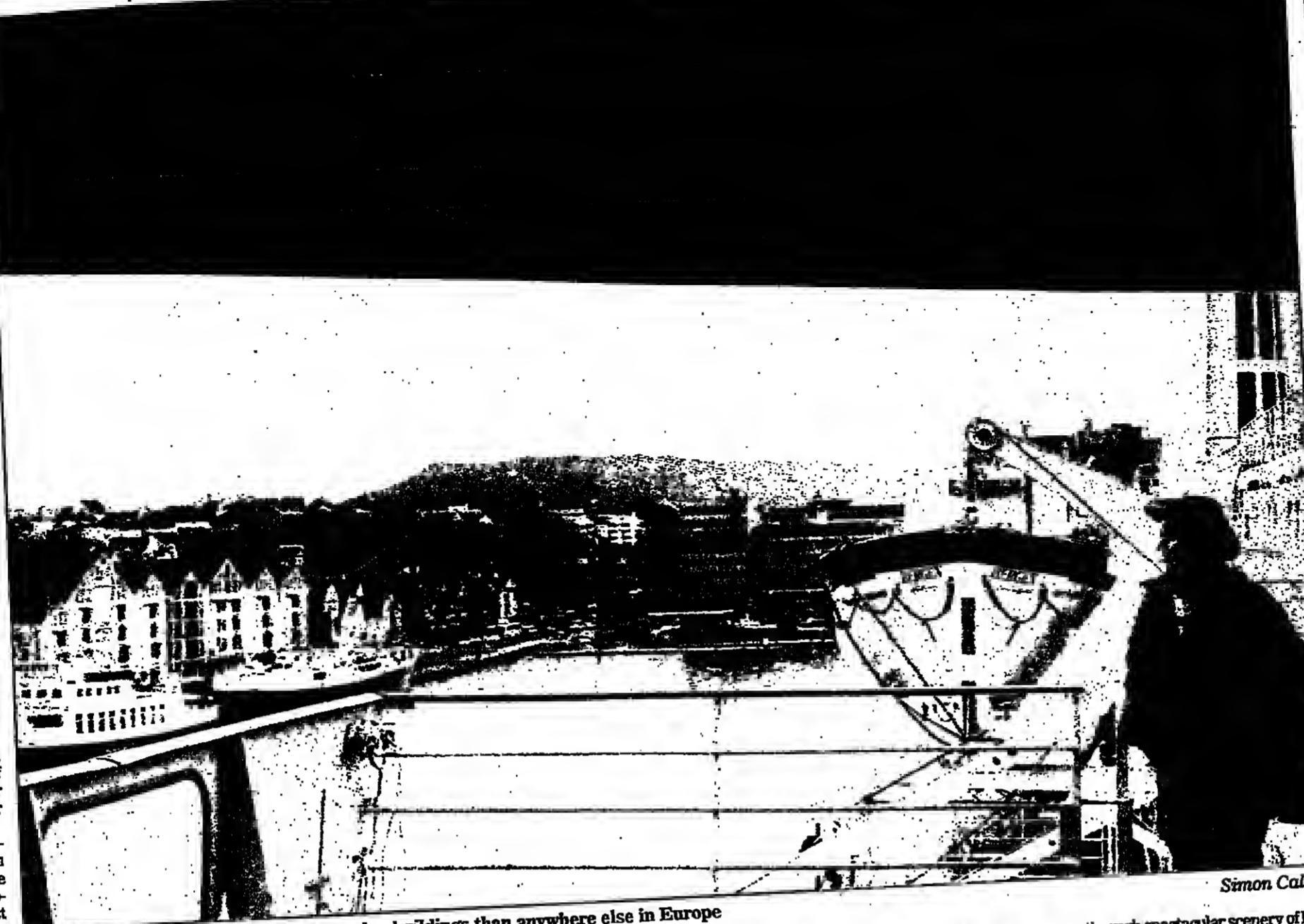
In his wryly amusing book *How to Understand and Use a Norwegian* Odd Borrelien says his compatriots are sober people who believe that God (and the King) are good things, but that they should behave like proper Norwegians and not think they are anything special - after all they are no more than human.

Nowhere is better than the ancient and beautiful city of Stavanger, the centre of the oil boom, to observe Norway's quiet new prosperity grafted on ancient Viking traditions. The city claims to be the heart of original Norway. Near Stavanger in 872 King Harald Fair-Hair won a battle which united the kingdom at a time when his countrymen were ruling much of the north from Shetland to Dublin and from York to Iceland.

The cathedral with two towers capped by green copper roofs would not be out of place in any British city. It dates back to the 12th century and overlooks a small lake, the Breivatn, which gives the centre a sense of tranquillity and lends the city the air of being a Scandinavian Wells or Ripon across the North Sea.

A hundred yards away the market on the quay provides fresh fish and crab. For years Stavanger made a living from fishing, its fleets supporting 70 canneries where most adults worked. The factories - and the smell - have gone but the link to the sea is still there. In Gamle Stavanger, the old residential quarter, cobbled streets of handsome, carefully preserved wooden houses survive to show how merchants and sea captains lived a century or more ago. It is supposed to have more wooden buildings in one area than anywhere else in Europe. "People actually live there and they enjoy the feeling of history," says Ellen, a local resident.

The town once had a reputation of being tight-fisted, religious in a



Stavanger is supposed to have more wooden buildings than anywhere else in Europe

very conservative manner and an opponent of alcohol (in 1862 the Norwegian Total Abstinence Society was founded in the city). That reputation has abated a little. Yet overlooking the Breivatn is the local branch of Vinmonopolet, the state-wide alcohol monopoly which is a reminder that the subject of prohibition is still a live one in Norway, particularly in the countryside. In an elegant, modern and rather sparse

shop a bottle of Tanqueray's gin will cost you almost £30 while a bottle of Teacher's Scotch can be yours for £27. A Norwegian explanation for their partiality for alcohol and for the reaction against it comes from the fact that Norwegians lived alone in caves for 8,000 years, never invented glasses or bottles and so always had to drink up the booze they manufactured at one go.

Stavanger has a number of attractive and cheery boozers, filled with happy drinkers sited around the

Vagen, the inner harbour. The Victoria Hotel where I stayed for about £50 a night (including one of those enormous Norwegian breakfasts) even has a pavement cafe.

With or without alcohol, Stavanger is in the big time, headquarters of multi-million pound companies. In its harbour complicated floating factories which go out into the North Sea to service the oil and gas fields are tied up, while across the water shipyards hum and

bang. In waters near here they have built oil rigs 10 times as big as the Eiffel Tower.

But human endeavour in Stavanger is dwarfed by nature. This is Rogaland, the southern end of the fjord country where the combination of mountains and water make even the oilmen's mightiest efforts look puny. The best way to arrive in the city is not by plane or boat from England or Scotland but by taking the train from Oslo which takes you

through spectacular scenery of high fells and lakes and isolated farms.

On the Lysefjord is a flat-topped peak, the Prekestolen or Pulpit where those who don't suffer from fear of heights can - at the risk of falling to their death down a sheer 2,000 feet drop - get a 180 degree view of miles around. Though this writer would be taken up to such a height only under general anaesthetic, going there is a favourite outing for the locals.

"The Norwegian's ideal is to be a son/daughter of the Sea, the Mountain, the Rustling Forest - in short a son/daughter of the Wilderness, independent of the namely pampered European lowlands civilisation with all its unnecessary luxury and comfort. A silent, pensive and unfettered bird who flies his own way," says Borrelien.

You can do and be all of that in Stavanger. And do it in considerable but understated oil-financed comfort.



GETTING THERE

YOU CAN reach Stavanger from a variety of British cities. Color Line (0191-296 1313) sails twice weekly from Newcastle, with a variety of special deals for short breaks. It is possible to fly to Stavanger from Aberdeen on KLM UK (0990 074074) and SAS (0845 607 2772); Glasgow on Widerøes (which operates a flight on behalf of SAS); London Gatwick on British Airways (0345 222111); London Heathrow on BA and SAS; and Newcastle on Braathens (0800 526938).

For longer stays, there is a variety of rail passes for Scandinavia, which allow unlimited travel all over Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

You can no longer buy these from Scandinavian Travel Services; try German Rail (0181-390 8838) or Rail Europe (0990 842848) instead.

The Norwegian Tourist Board, Charles House, 5-11 Lower Regent Street, London SW1Y 4LR (0171-339 6255) can provide information and free maps.

A romantic tryst in Legoland

An inspired quest of artistic excellence to find a legendary musical duo during a hopelessly dewy-eyed weekend in Denmark's Land's End? Well, nearly. By Leonida Krushelnycky

IT WAS a disc jockey in the city of Aalborg who tipped us off about Sussi and Leo. An hour north of Aalborg, and you hit the end of Denmark at Skagen, a town so picturesque, Legoland could have built it. Small ochre-coloured houses with chunky red roof-tiles snuggle around a harbour bustling with trawlers even in the depths of winter. And a short walk out of town will bring you to natural phenomena that make you laugh and clap like a small child.

The North Sea and the Baltic meet at Skagen in a whirlpool of waves. Even in winter you'll see intrepid visitors trying to take pictures of their loved ones with one foot in the west and one in the east. Definitely more exciting than straddling the Greenwich meridian.

If you're not game enough for that, you can always retreat to the jewel of a museum dedicated to the works of Victorian artists who came to paint the light that bounces off the sea.

We had no time for frivolities.

Opposite the museum, we found the Brondums Hotel, an architectural gem. The warmth of a roaring fire beckoned us in. Instead of offering us a room within the hotel, the owner took us outside and showed us a small house nesting in its own tiny garden. We looked dubious until he showed us the bedroom complete with a working stove. Maybe I would get my romantic weekend after all.

Had we come from England to see the museum, or the famous Grenen beach where the Baltic and North Sea meet in glorious pitched battle? "No", we replied. "We've come to see Sussi and Leo." He was too professional to let his look of horror last more than a second. He left with the words, "You either love them or hate them," chilling in the cold air.

We nearly abandoned our quest then. But curiosity got the better of us. What could be so bad or so good that it divided a



Skagen, where the North Sea and Baltic meet

nation? We set off to find the Skansen pub.

It was ominously silent as we pushed open the door. Three locals sat hunched over the bar.

But, above them in glorious Technicolor hung T-shirts, posters and even life-helts all adorned with the smiling faces of Sussi and Leo. We had come to the Mecca of kitsch. And in the short time it took to order and down a Tuborg, Jonnie, the most ardent of their fans, told us the duo's life history as well as his own.

Sussi and Leo are paid the phenomenal amount of one million kroner to play five nights a week in the pub. This is not funny money - this is £100,000. They've been together for 25 years since they met at school. Sussi still makes their own costumes. Oh, and

Jonnie is Denmark's only Stoke City supporter; his disappointment that we'd never met Gordon Banks was heart-rending.

An hour later the whole of Skagen was packed into the bar. Teenagers and old fishermen were dancing to the sounds of Sussi and Leo belting out the air-guitarists' favourite *Smoke on the Water*. After I had lifted my boyfriend off the floor, we stood giggling at the back watching them murder song after song. We had stumbled upon Denmark's best kept secret. A musical fusion of Abba and Des O'Connor, complete with accordion and spangly outfit.

During a short break in the proceedings, Sussi and Leo handed out pictures of themselves and signed autographs.

Instead of paper the fans began offering parts of their bodies. Foreheads and arms were held up. And Sussi didn't bat an eyelid when the man in front dropped his trousers - she bent down and signed his backside with a flourish. I approached Leo as he lit a pipe, and timidly asked for the secret of their success. He paused, took a puff, looked me deep in the eyes, and said sagely: "I don't know."

As the songs resumed we found ourselves dragged on to the dance floor. Where else but in Skagen could you be twirled around by a drunken Dane to the strains of *Loch Lomond*? But we knew it was time to leave when *Proud Mary* came around the fourth time, and a fisherman in waterproofs and galoshes staggered my way for

yet another frenzied dance. We did see the rest of Skagen the next day - the museum and the beach and the church part-buried by shifting sands. But the most famous landmark has to be Sussi and Leo. We love them; our growing CD collection proves it.

• *Sussi and Leo play at the Skansen pub every night except Sunday and Monday.*

• *Skagen Museum opens daily from June to August from 10am to 6pm; shorter hours in winter. Brondums Hotel, Anchervej 3 (00 45 98 441555), has rooms from £200/kr (about £40) single to £600/kr (£240) double.*

• *The Skagen tourist office is on Skt Laurentii Vej; open 9am-5.30pm Monday to Saturday, 10am-3pm on Sunday (00 45 98 441377).*

minor, which must come as a great relief to the parents of children at boarding school and those who need their offspring to travel separately.

On average, children (or their parents) pay two-thirds of the normal adult flight price. Most airlines offer the service from the age of six although some airlines take passengers as young as four. More travel, overseas postings and mixed country marriages (and divorces) mean that this market can only grow.

The rules of each airline vary slightly and it is worthwhile checking the exact procedure as you book the ticket. Procedures are followed rigidly at check-in time. Parents and guardians need to sign the appropriate paperwork and inform the airline who will be collecting the child at the destination.

Things are different with the airlines. The smaller, cheaper ones don't operate UM schemes. The larger, former national carriers have continued, but the format is much more structured. Moving children is a risky business. British Airways even offers a flying escort service for those unwilling to let their child fly alone.

British Airways started an unaccompanied minors programme in Heathrow back in 1962. Gatwick started in 1974, and in 1996/97, 1.2 million unaccompanied minors were passengers on what is now known (since 1988) as the Skyfliers programme. There is rarely an extra charge on any airline for being an unaccompanied

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It is crucial that the person collecting the child has an accepted form of identity such as a passport. The person leaving the child is then asked to wait at the departure terminal for at least ten minutes after take-off.

Caroline Ricketts, who is now ten, enjoyed travelling as a UM when her parents were based at the British embassy in Paris. She liked the cartoons and the computer games and the free crisps in the lounge. She also liked her free travel bag with the colouring pencils and puzzles. Her brother Edward did not like all the "nanny-ing" when he got to be about ten or 11 and it is probable for this reason that most of the airlines do not offer the service after the age of 12.

However, on one occasion, nobody called Edward and he almost missed his flight. His mother, Suzanne, was not impressed. She wrote a letter to British Airways complaining about the incident and Edward was sent a "horrible plastic Concorde" as compensation.

Melanie de Renzy Martin's son, Henry, was younger and not so lucky. He was not collected for his flight when it was leaving Amsterdam and his parents were left stranded at Heathrow for about 90 minutes, not knowing what was going on.

The key seems to be to prepare your child well in advance for their trip travelling alone, presenting it as an exciting and grown-up thing to do. According to a friend of mine, who is a flight attendant with Air France, children are well prepared, easy going and "generally" well behaved. "They just love those enormous pouches that carry their passports and we rarely have any NUMs," (Naughty Unaccompanied Minors).

Travelling the world can be child's play

The ups and downs of children flying alone. By Margaret St John



I CAN still remember the excitement. Almost 30 years ago, my sister and I flew, without our parents, from London to Dublin. My mother checked us in at Heathrow, where we received our enormous name badges, and a very nice air hostess took us down to the plane.

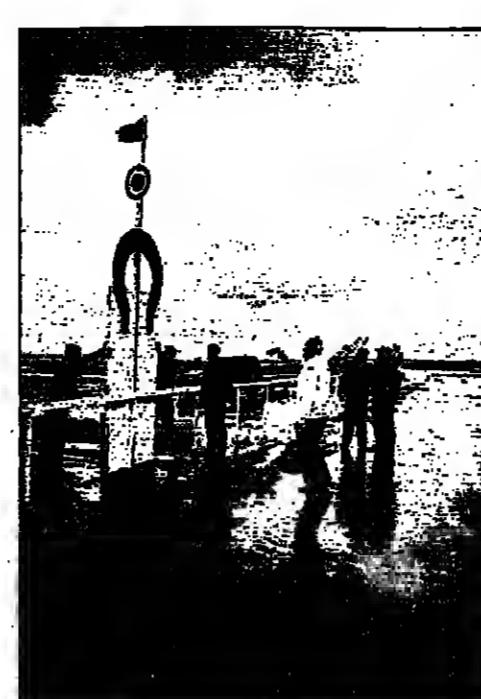
As many Coca-Colas as we could manage later, we were as nine and seven year old UMs (Unaccompanied Minors) able to find our baggage, go through the Green Channel, and locate our perfectly relaxed father in the Arrivals Hall.

How things have changed! I tried to book a ticket for my 12-year-old goddaughter on Eurostar and was told that no one under the age of 14 could travel without an adult - "company policy," she said. They did finally let her travel as a UM when her parents wrote a letter which my goddaughter had to present to staff as she boarded the train.

Things are different with the airlines. The smaller, cheaper ones don't operate UM schemes. The larger, former national carriers have continued, but the format is much more structured. Moving children is a risky business. British Airways even offers a flying escort service for those unwilling to let their child fly alone.

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minor, which must come as a great relief to the parents of children at boarding school and those who need their offspring to travel separately.



Baywatch on the hoof

No matter what the weather, the going at one Irish racing festival is always good. By Eddie Wiley. Photographs by Caroline Norris

SUN, SEA, sand and a six-race card make for a great day at the annual beach race at Laytown, Co Meath, on the east coast of Ireland. Even being compelled to substitute stormy skies, intermittent rain and a breeze that the locals described as "fresh", but had everyone else swaying at 45 degree angles, didn't dampen the enthusiasm.

Eccentricity is a hallmark of many Irish festivals - this week sees the start of the International Bachelor Festival in Ballybunion, Co Kerry, and in September the hugely popular Match-making Festival takes place in Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare - but the Laytown Race Festival is unique.

The annual race meeting was started by the local parish priest in 1868. Being frowned upon by his bishop, the priest conveniently assured his conscience by running the festival every sec-

ond year. Since 1901, the races have been held annually with the support of the Delaney family who donate the use of the land and have continued to play a part in the festivities.

Beach racing also has its place in literary history. In the otherwise risible stage-Oirish production, Old Malone recognises his eponymous son, The Playboy of the Western World, as the winning jockey. In fairness to the author, J M Synge, even his demi-heroine widow Quinn would have found the going heavy to get a bet on around the packed betting ring. The real-life punters had to wait until the fourth race for a winning favourite to gallop down the ocean course. Theatrical certainly but definitely not a *Baywatch* production.

Laytown's equivalent of David Hasselhoff and his liltie Californians were the tweed-

wrapped stewards clinging ruddy-faced to a life guard podium that could well have been deployed at the first meeting 130 years ago.

With an eye to increase safety following the death of a number of horses in 1995, the course has been changed from an oval to a straight 10 furlongs, with well-established running rails, head-on cameras and all the accoutrements of a very professionally-run race meeting. Set

against the backdrop of billowing marquees, street entertainers and traditional musicians, it's as if Newmarket's Rowley Mile meets JP Barnum. And with races like the Guinness Perfect Pint Handicap, it's little wonder that the hospitality tents resembled a sack full of rabbits as they bulged with the throng of obviously-parched race goers.

This year a line in the sand had to be drawn with the contribution of the Beaufort Dyke. The Sapphically-named deep sea trench, running between Northern Ireland and Scotland, was the dumping ground for millions of tonnes of Second World War ordnance. A recent cable-laying operation has resulted in some of the nasty items, mostly incendiary bombs, washing ashore on the east coast. But with the beach closed to the public on race day, and a full-scale safety operation involving the army and civil defence forces, the area was declared safe for racing.

Even the appearance of the "This one's for you Adolf" surprises didn't perturb Brendan Sheridan, the retired National Hunt jockey and now clerk of the course: "No matter what the weather or the sea turns up, the going at Laytown is always good." And who would doubt it?



Somme fine day ...

Take advantage of northern France's new motorways to explore the quiet coast of Picardy. By Gerard Gilbert

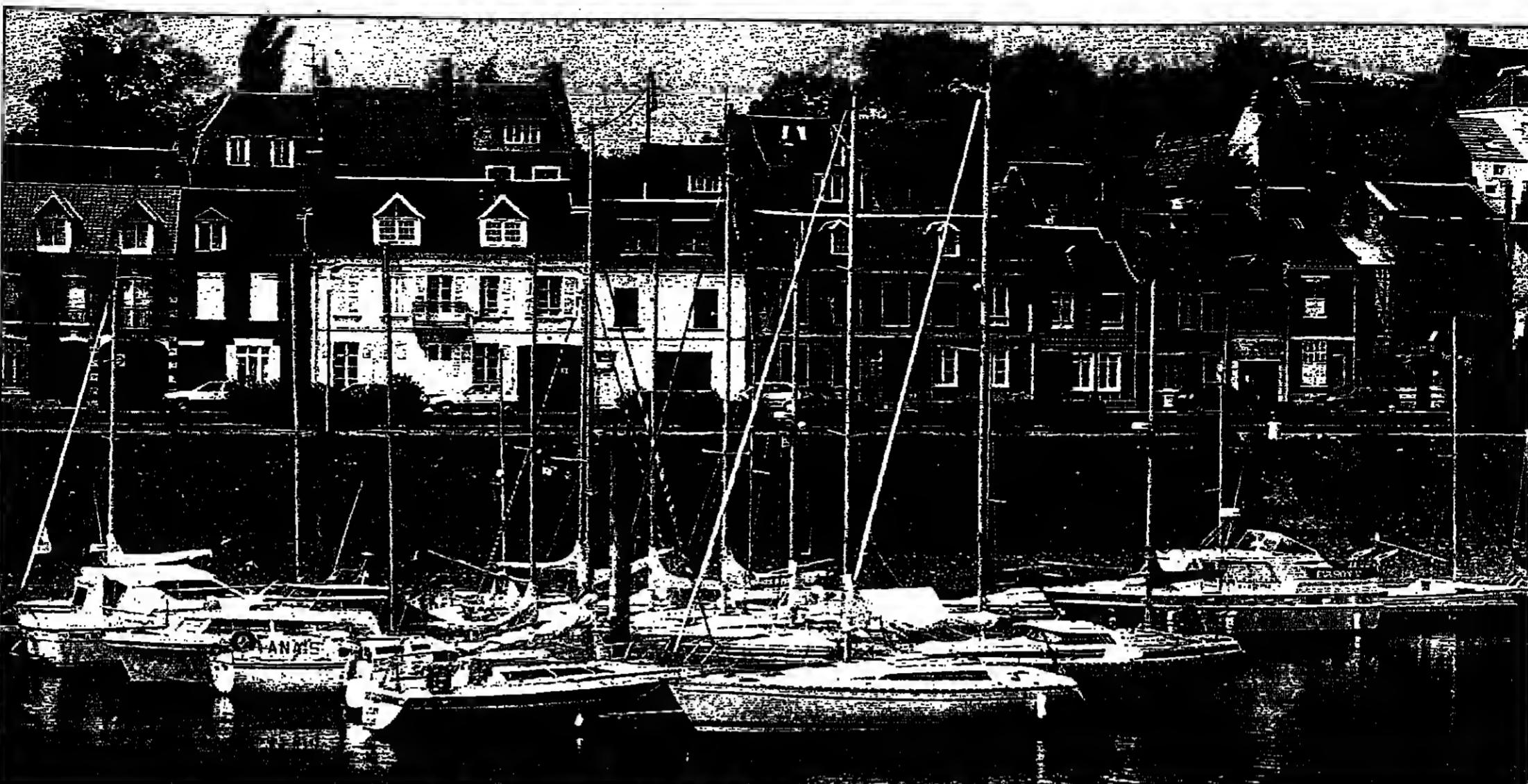
THERE WAS a time when a day trip across the Channel to Calais or Boulogne meant sticking to your Channel port of destination - or a timid excursion as far as one of the prettier villages in the Pas de Calais (and there are some). A rich stuffing at a restaurant later, and the duty free beckoned before the journey home. The motorways have changed all that. The final piece in the jigsaw of new autoroutes that have been slicing through the vast, flat plains of northern France over the past 10 years fell into place last month with the opening of the A16 between Boulogne and Abbeville. For a toll of 40 francs, it is now possible to reach the fringes of Normandy well within an hour of leaving your Shuttle or ferry at Calais, and some interesting destinations have been opened up to the quickie traveller.

Foremost amongst these must be the Bay of the Somme, where the Somme canal, built by Napoleon to connect the river Somme with the English Channel, filters into the sea. It's one of the quietest, oddest and least explored corners of France, and now it's within an easy burn of the Channel ports.

Perhaps it's the Somme's associations with the slaughter of the First World War that puts people off - but the river's wide estuary saw none of that, although St Valéry, at the western side of the bay, was a British freight port in those dreadful years. The town saw action again briefly in May 1940, before reverting to its accustomed state of dreamy slumber - big skies, opaque light, birdsong and colourful shrimping boats stranded by the low tide.

When driving down the A16 from Calais and Boulogne, come off at Exit 24 and head for St Valéry-sur-Somme or Le Crotoy, which bookend the Bay de Somme. Both have their charms, although I prefer St Valéry, home of Colette and weekend retreat of Jules Verne. Le Crotoy, not to be outdone, is where Joan of Arc was imprisoned in 1430 before being taken to her date with destiny in Rouen. Legend has it that Harold of Wessex was another illustrious prisoner in the region. One of history's greatest saint camps, it seems.

As it happened, I approached the Somme from the other direction, along the coast road west from



Le Crotoy on the Bay de Somme, where Joan of Arc was imprisoned in 1430

Frank Spooner Pictures

Dieppe. This gives you the chance first to take in the faded seaside resort to beat all faded seaside resorts - lovely, pebbled beach Cayeux-sur-Mer with its white beach huts, the largest number in one resort in Europe. The landscape around here is reminiscent of the Suffolk coast. The ambitiously named Brighton-Pins, however, reminded me of nothing on Earth. Apparently built to attract visitors from England, this sand-swept huddle of shuttered holiday homes would make a superb movie backdrop. Early Roman Polanski, perhaps, or a

French version of *The Avengers*. The coast road, which is shadowed by an impressive cycle path, takes you into St Valéry, and lunch at Le Relais Guillaume de Normandie (that's William the Conqueror to you and me). It's not obligatory, but the views of the bay from the turn-of-the-century dining-room make it very worthwhile.

As does the use of *pré-salé* lamb in the menu. This is lighter and saltier than the norm; the lambs have been grazed for a minimum of 120 days on the bay's salt marshes. On the 87F menu at the Relais I took it

in the form of a delicious warming stew - a bit too warming, in fact, on such a humid June day. And, in honour of the fact that I was in the province of Picardy, I started with a *ficelle picarde*, a savoury crepe filled with ham, mushrooms and onions. After lunch a walk was obviously in order - and there are some adventurous and highly unusual walks to be had in and around the bay. Potentially dangerous, too. If you want to go hiking on the bay itself, then you must make sure - that signs everywhere make clear - that the tide is at least three-and-a-half

hours off being at its height. It can come crashing back in more quickly than you can walk in the boggy mud. Tide timetables can be bought for 5F at the Tourist office in Place Guillaume le Conquerant. That William the Conqueror again.

It is also heavily advised that you hire a guide, although there were none available until the high season, according to the tourist office. So, with slight relief, I must admit, I headed off to Le Marqueterie Bird Park, a supremely well organised preservation area set amidst 2,300 hectares of marsh and sand dunes

to the north west of Le Crotoy. It is a temporary home to more than 300 species of migratory bird, stopping off between Russia, Africa and the Arctic; only the Camargue region plays host to more avian passengers than the Bay of the Somme.

Having never lifted a pair of binoculars in anger before, I was seduced by the park. Two itineraries are on offer: a 2-kilometre-round ramble, which takes about an hour; and a more ambitious 6-km bike, for which "binoculars are strongly recommended". I was there last week, and ducklings learning to swim were

stealing the show. It's exhilarating just to be ambling along and have a heron or a stork swoop by at head height - although the party of noisy French schoolchildren ahead made me wish for something more predatory.

Motorists can sail to Calais from Dover on HoverSpeed (01304 240241), P&O Stena Line (0990 980980) or SeaFrance (0990 711711), or travel through the Channel Tunnel on Le Shuttle (0990 353535). Fares for short breaks are good value, and a return journey for a car and two people could cost as little as £50.

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When Pele pits her wits against Na Maka o Kaha'i, the result can be cataclysmic. Paris Franz follows the Destruction Trail to the red-hot core of Hawaii's Mount Kilauea

A flow of spirits

THE SMELL of sulphur is not unpleasant to a sinner, at least according to Mark Twain, and he may well be right. It is best sampled on a full stomach, however, which could explain why there is a cafeteria at the top of Mount Kilauea. The visitor's centre at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is perched on the lip of the caldera of the world's most active volcano, complete with rocks, vents and sulphur clouds, and the sight does wonders for the appetite.

The cafeteria was crowded but the three of us managed to get a table by the window with its panoramic view of the caldera, 10 miles in circumference. Against a background of lively chatter and the dramatic music accompanying a video showing a stately flow of lava, we ordered coffee and began our research.

You don't have to be in the islands long to know that Hawaii is volcanoes. Situated above a hot spot in the earth's crust, the Aloha State owes its existence to the tumultuous forces of nature deep down in the Earth, each island being the product of fiery eruptions over the millennia. As the Pacific Plate moves ever so slowly north-westwards, new islands are formed. The Big Island, geology in action, is over the hot spot now, and it's getting bigger all the time, with the flows of lava adding acres of land to the coast each year. The leaflets picked up in the lobby were full of such information. One advised us that eruptions occur every 11 months, on average; that one flow destroyed bouses but changed direction to avoid an ancient temple, or *heiau*; that violent explosions are rare. That last one was nice to know.

It seems that scientists have combed every square inch of Kilauea. But science isn't all, it turns out, because another leaflet revealed that Mount Kilauea is also the home of Madame Pele. The menter of rocks, the burner of lands and maker of mountains, Pele is to be respected. She lives in Hatemauau Crater, within the caldera, and she can apparently be a most capricious host. It is said that should you meet her, in whatever form she takes - beautiful young woman, ugly old hag - it's wise to be kind.

This reminded me of a man I had

met in Honolulu. He'd told me that a volcanologist friend of his had a picture of a flaming crater, and there in the middle was a young woman with streaming black hair and an imperious chin. You had to see it in the right light, he said.

Whatever the merits of the volcanologist's photograph, it's a fact that the local post office regularly receives chunks of rock from previous visitors who are convinced that such souvenirs have brought them bad luck. And offerings are still left on the mountainside. Gin, usually. Well, it can't hurt.

Pele's certainly been busy lately. The current flow was a big one, by all accounts, and worth a look, so we headed back to the car for a drive down the Chain of Craters Road. Passing the Thurston Lava Tube and Devastation Trail, we followed the road to the end, which came suddenly, 25 miles later. A lava flow had cut the road and it was clear we would have to walk from here.



HAWAII FACTS

Getting there: There are no direct flights from the UK to anywhere in the state of Hawaii. It is difficult to reach Hilo on the island of Hawaii with a single change of plane; you will normally have to travel via Los Angeles or San Francisco, and Honolulu. Discount agents such as Quest Worldwide (0181-546 6000) sell tickets for travel on United in June for £671 including tax.

More information: Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau, 2270 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite 801, Honolulu, Hawaii US 96815 (001 808 923 1811)

The closer we got to the ocean, the more the wind picked up, the spray falling like rain, the surf pounding hard against the wall of lava below us. This is the eternal battle between Pele and Na Maka o Kaha'i, goddess of the sea. The legend says that Na Maka o Kaha'i has pursued Pele from island to island, and it doesn't look as if she's satisfied yet.

Recklessly I clambered down on to a ledge. A black cliff rose up behind me, the hollowing steam blotting out the sky. Then the wind changed and the steam parted to reveal a river of molten lava, all orange and red, pouring into the sea. A wrenching, cracking sound came from close by, as a big chunk of lava cracked under the strain, falling into the Pacific with a mighty splash.

Score one for Na Maka o Kaha'i. Don't discount Pele, though. She has dug deep and built high on the Big Island, and she's also looking to the future. While the Big Island is still getting bigger, some 20 miles to the south east the Lohi Seamount gets closer to the surface with each eruption. Pele will always have somewhere to go.

Windswept and damp, we headed back to the car and the bright lights of Kailua, with traffic building up as we went. There was some anxiety about driving on the other side of the road, but we got back safe and sound. Who knows, maybe Madame Pele was looking after us.



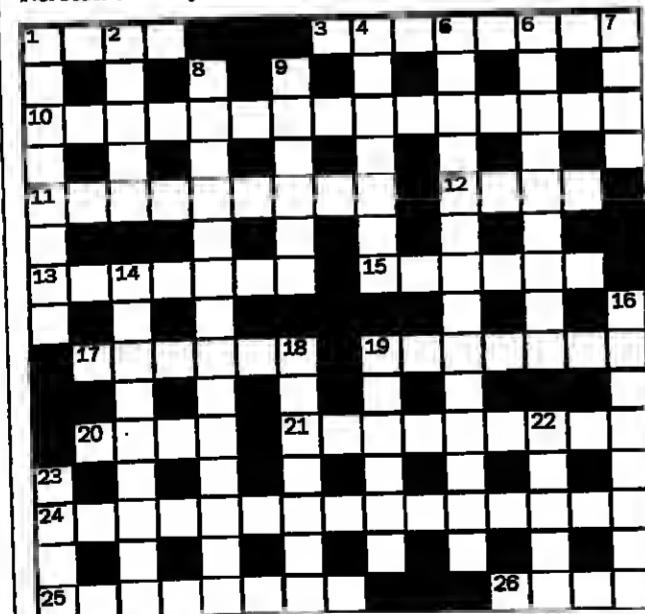
Kilauea is the result of warring spirits, so Hawaiian lore has it

Douglas Peebles/Robert Harding Picture Library

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

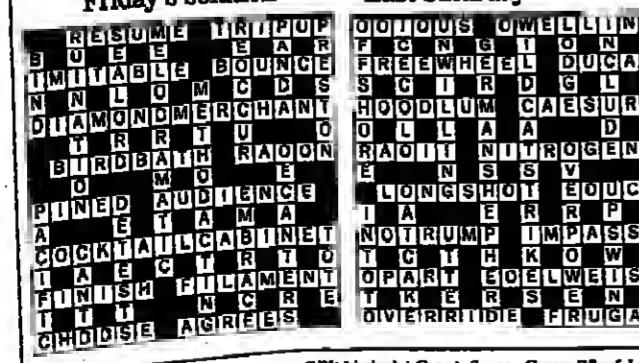
No. 3636. Saturday 13 June

By Phi



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



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ACROSS

- Obscuring mass of oil obscuring Lake (4)
- A great many backed new cattle-worker (8)
- Resigning oneself to a problem with eating gamblers? (6,3,6)
- Great pain with resolution - it's recurrent (6)
- Tragic heroine acted with love (4)
- Conservative needs help holding in group of ministers (7)
- Warm up gets theatre excited, taking no time (6)
- Take off and put into orbit (4,2)
- They bar changes in the memory (2,5)
- Is family something very close? (4)
- It's unlikely to be able to help ease a Tequila hangover! (9)
- Are our foes retreating? It's only a question of time (3,4,3)
- Gory cell cleaned up with sweet stuf (8)
- Runs away from tense woman (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of . Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, 1 O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Please give the telephone number and postcode of your town or post town. Last week's winners: F. Ross Lee-on-Solent; M. Ross, Teddington; M. Zimmerman, St Albans; J. Smith, St. Helens; T. Haynes-Smith, Newport.

DOWN

- Take away leaflet about sea travel? (8)
- TUC upset? (3,2)
- State imprisoning English as a source of retaliation (7)
- Moving due North, keeps on a circuitous course (5,3,6)
- Sensational play shocked moral dame (9)
- A, B, C, D, F or G? (4)
- One could rely on this i.e. man renounced working (8,6)
- Meticulous curtailment of diversion in street (6)
- Magistrate imprisoning leader of robbers - one means to escape (5,4)
- Girlfriend's willing? Hold back! (6,2)
- Artist shows picture when exactly right (7)
- B - (mild curse) (6)
- Laughter maker longing to indulge in laugh (not half) (5)
- Yank seizes head of hardened criminal (4)

A PLANE

Whatever happened to the Boeing 717? In the Sixties, the sequence of number from the Seattle-based aircraft manufacturer jumped from the 707 to the 727, and has since reached 777. So No 717 is being applied to a new, small jet that was being developed by McDonnell Douglas before Boeing took it over last year.

It is a twin-jet seating about 100, and the engines are made by BMW/Rolls-Royce in Germany. This week the 717 was rolled out in Long Beach, California; next year the first commercial flight will take place. The launch customer is Air-Iran - the low-cost airline formerly known as ValuJet.

A BOAT

If you were planning to sail to Belgium on the new ferry line Sally Direct (0845 800 2626), you won't have much luck. Passengers from Ramsgate to Ostend are not being allowed to disembark at the Belgian port. Once it has permission to land people there, the company will charge £25 for a 24-hour return for a car plus five people.

CHECK IN

A TRAIN

However you get to Belgium, the unlimited travel deals on trains in Belgium are excellent value. The B-Tourail card allows five days' unlimited travel for £1000FF (£35, or just £7 per day). For the same price you can buy a ticket that allows 10 journeys between any two stations, at any time after 9am. Several people can use it; a group of five could travel from Ostend to Liège and back for £7 each. More information from Belgian Railways in London (0171-976 0041); the tickets can be bought only in Belgium.

A ROOM

Hamburg's newest hotel, the ultra-swish Hyatt Hamburg, has a summer special of DM 245/285 single/double until September. A double room rate of under £100 is excellent value, and the Park

great coffee cities of Europe, in a new *Independent/Café Crème* competition.

A MONTH FROM NOW

... two new connections will be made from British airports. EasyJet (0890 292929) is launching flights from Luton to Athens, with fares from £59 one-way. EasyJet has plans for a separate airline, EasyJet Greece, aimed at the Greek domestic market.

In Scotland, Continental Airlines (0800 776464) has a new non-stop flight from Glasgow to Newark. Continental's East Coast hub has connections all over the US.

A YEAR FROM NOW

... you could attend the Roots Festival in the Gambia, a week-long celebration of Gambian culture that also commemorates the enslavement of millions of Africans. Gambia Experience (01703 730880) is offering a fortnight at the Badala Park hotel next June for £418, including flights.

TODAY'S TELEVISION APPEARS IN THE SEPARATE LISTINGS GUIDE

هذا من الأصل



NIC CICUTTI

Building societies and the BSA aren't that cynical. Are they?

I HAVE always had a soft spot for the Building Societies Association (BSA), which represents mutually-owned lending institutions.

Building societies have in recent years stood up for the interests of ordinary people. They deliver lower-cost mortgages and higher rates on savings accounts than most banks, including those like the Halifax, Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester - which used to be societies themselves.

Which is why I find the latest proposal by the BSA's director general, Adrian Coles, so barny.

Mr Coles and the BSA have issued a consultative paper which proposes scrapping redemption penalties, the nasty little sting in the tail affecting those who want to switch their mortgages at the end of fixed and discounted mortgage periods.

The BSA argues, among other things, that redemption penalties prevent people from avoiding "interest rate shock", when you move suddenly from a low fixed rate to a much higher variable one. The difference can mean hundreds of pounds a month in mortgage payments.

By cutting redemption penalties, you make cut-price deals much harder to offer, therefore people won't suffer this shock so badly, seems to be the line.

Forgive me, but I don't buy the argument. Sure, there will almost always be a minority of people who suffer when their mortgages rise at the end of a fixed or discounted period.

But for the most part, the reasons why people have been attracted by such deals are utilitarian: they offer a way of controlling home loan costs for a time, usually at a lower rate than is currently payable. Alternatively, with cashbacks, they give borrowers a lump sum to do up the properties they have just bought.

In other words, they suit

certain kinds of borrowers and perform a useful service for them. Sure, such deals are also open to abuse, usually when the penalties for switching loans midstream are hidden in the small print or are too onerous.

Then again, variable rate loans are not exactly wonderful either: those of us who had the misfortune of borrowing in the 80s will remember mortgage costs virtually doubling over a short period of time. Fixing would at least have prevented the despair many felt whenever the next building society letter announcing a rate rise dropped onto the mat.

What guarantee is there that if we all give up fixed rates, discounts or cashbacks that lenders - building societies included - would treat us more fairly? Precious little, I suspect.

That is why I don't quite understand the reason for the BSA's move to reduce our choice in this way. Unless of course it owes more to the desire by building societies to win business from banks and retain it.

You see, the societies argue they are more competitive than banks and, for the most part, they are - at least when it comes to offering cheaper variable rate loans. Nationwide's 0.6 per cent better than the Halifax.

Discounts and fixes have an unfortunate habit of obscuring this fact, particularly when lenders want to "buy business" by offering extra-soft deals. They then make the money back by locking us in for a few years. If I were a cynical building society chief, I might be tempted to argue in favour of scrapping redemption penalties just so that the competition is forced to compete on my own turf. And sod what customers actually want.

Of course, I must be wrong about all of this. Building societies and the BSA aren't that cynical. Are they?

FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

Towards a French future

Names: David Marsh and Edward Moss.

Ages: 47 and 32.

Occupations: former head-teacher and teacher.

The problem: David has taken early retirement but Edward is still employed. They would like to spend more time in France, where they own a property. The ideal balance would be to spend six months in the UK and six months in France. The couple want to know how to maximise their earnings, including the possibility of buying another property, plus investing a large lump sum.

The solution: if spending more time in France is important, it may make sense to sell their home in the UK and buy a smaller one, particularly when David and Edward won't be using it that often. Buying another house in the UK for investment purposes does not make sense. The couple should invest their cash for retirement but also use some of the money to pay off their existing mortgage.

DAVID AND EDWARD have been together for about six years. Both have worked in the teaching profession, from which David recently retired on grounds of stress. His pension is £15,000 a year. Edward is still working and his present salary is about £23,000 a year.

The couple live in David's home in London, valued at £200,000. This costs about £1,100 a month in mortgage, insurance and other services. They also have a cottage in France, which is mostly paid for and which costs some £700 a year to run, although the couple say they spend a lot more than that on its garden.

David has some £32,000 on deposit, paid to him as severance when he retired. He has an endowment policy which matures in 2012, with a minimum value of £75,000. Other than that the couple's investments are minimal.

Edward is still a member of the teachers' superannuation scheme, into which he pays up to the legal maximum via a combination of top-up contributions.

There is some debate also as to whether Edward should buy a property of his own for investment purposes.

The adviser: Amanda Davidson, a partner at Holden Meehan, independent financial advisers in London (0171 692 1700).

The advice: Edward and David are pondering over a



David Marsh and Edward Moss are looking for an easier and more satisfying life

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

bution with Prudential and Barclays schemes.

The couple want to take things easier, possibly moving to France and retiring altogether. But the question is how to reconcile the obvious loss of income without suffering too dramatic a change in lifestyle.

They wonder whether they should sell the property in London to reduce their outgoings and buy something cheaper. Whereas this is the preferred route, both admit that the property is ideal for them in many ways, because it is quiet and they are established there.

There is some debate also as to whether Edward should buy a property of his own for investment purposes.

The adviser: Amanda Davidson, a partner at Holden Meehan, independent financial advisers in London (0171 692 1700).

The advice: Edward and David are pondering over a

variety of options. They are carrying a large mortgage at the moment, £110,000, with a policy to back it that does not mature for another 14 years.

As both Edward and David want to spend more time in France, it would make sense for them to move towards this eventual outcome. I therefore recommend that they should consider selling the property in England, albeit not necessarily immediately. They can then purchase a more modest property which will have the advantage of reducing their monthly outgoings.

Bearing in mind that they spend only nine months of the year in the UK, they are not getting full value for their mortgage commitment. Of course David should retain the endowment to set against a future property and in any event even if the mortgage is entirely discharged, then he should maintain this as a savings plan to

give a lump sum at some stage in the future. If they wanted to realise the money earlier it may be possible to reduce the term of the policy so long as there is 10 years to maturity.

The ideal amount of mortgage would be £30,000-240,000 as this will reduce commitments dramatically and enable David and Edward to increase their savings towards the goal of early retirement for Edward and more time spent in France.

Edward is up to his limit in terms of pension contributions.

He should obviously maintain things at this level as his income increases. If he wants to retire at age 50, he will have had 22 years' service by then. However, these days it is much harder for teachers to retire earlier and there are likely to be early-retirement penalties which Edward should investigate by asking his pensions department.

I anticipate that by main-

taining the additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) he is already making, Edward is heading for 11 per cent of his income or some £2,750 per annum in real terms at age 50. It would be ideal if we could make this up to two-thirds, which would involve another increased commitment from Edward of about £200 per month. He is paying £150 per month into a PEP which goes some way towards this.

Edward is up to his limit in terms of pension contributions. He should obviously maintain things at this level as his income increases. If he wants to retire at age 50, he will have had 22 years' service by then. However, these days it is much harder for teachers to retire earlier and there are likely to be early-retirement penalties which Edward should investigate by asking his pensions department.

If David and Edward are going to stay in their current property for a number of years, then they should look to renegotiate their mortgage. But

any arrangement is going to tie them in for a length of time and they need to make sure that fits in with their plans for moving.

David has some £32,000 to invest. My advice is that he should keep £3,000 for emergencies. This should be in a high-interest account, such as the one offered by Standard Life Bank, which pays 6.56 per cent gross. This will suit them as they can make transfers by phone, even when in France.

With the rest, David should put his maximum £2,000 allowing into a PEP. As a first-time PEP investor, 50 per cent should be placed in the UK and 50 per cent internationally. Good providers include Fidelity and Perpetual. David has indicated that he would like to invest the money ethically. If this is a strong consideration, then he could invest his £6,000 in a PEP with NPI or Juniper, which both have ethical funds.

David could give £4,000 to Edward to top up his own Prudential PEP. This money could go, for instance, to a European fund. The track record of Prudential's European Fund has been fairly mediocre, but investors are allowed to choose only one PEP fund manager per year, which means either staying with Prudential or transferring to another provider. This can have significant new initial investment costs.

I suggest David pays off some of the mortgage with the remaining £17,000. He will not get the same return on his capital in a risk-free environment and it will also help reduce the couple's monthly outgoings.

Finally, as Edward and David are partners, there are some more issues to consider. Sensibly, they have made wills both in this country and in France, leaving property and assets to each other. Edward should check that the teacher's superannuation scheme allows him to name David as beneficiary in the event of his death - although, unfortunately, many public sector schemes do not allow non-married couples to receive their partners' pensions when they die.

Don't lose on penalties.

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Tax exile on Main St

The end of the Foreign Earnings Exemption is set to hit the little people hardest, says Nic Cicutti

MIX A FAMOUS rock band stuffed with 50-something millionaires with a Chancellor of the Exchequer determined to stamp out tax evasion and you have all the ingredients for a huge row.

Or so it proved earlier this week, after the Rolling Stones cancelled the British leg of their world tour, for which more than 300,000 tickets had already been sold, claiming that to carry on would land them with an additional £12m tax bill.

Mick Jagger said at the time:

"It would have meant the entire European tour ran at a loss and we just couldn't do that. It would have been foolish."

Jagger's comments relate to a tax change which came into effect on Budget Day on March 17. Until then, British people who lived and worked abroad for more than a year were exempt from British taxes on their earnings, so long as they did not spend more than 62 days in this country. The scheme was introduced in 1977 by then Labour Chancellor, Denis Healey, and was known as the Foreign Earnings Exemption.

The aim was to encourage UK workers to work abroad for periods of up to 365 days - straddling more than one tax year - and pay no tax, without having to become non-resident in their own country.

Under the former system, bands were able to set up a firm to act as their employers. A record company then pays the firm rather than the group. The firm then pays the stars "salaries" which are tax-free if they are working outside the UK.

That concession has now been ended. Any UK resident who works in Britain at all during a tax year must pay tax here on their entire earnings - a change that is expected to raise £25m a year.

The Treasury, of course,



It won't be Mick who's clobbered

played the game brilliantly. The Stones were accused of being multi-millionaire whingers who were just out to avoid paying a few more pounds in tax. Hence the "exclusive" leaks to sympathetic journalists to the effect that the Rolling Stones barely pay more than 2.5p tax in the pound on their earnings.

The problem, however, is that it won't be Mick, Charlie, Keith and Ronnie who are clobbered by Gordon Brown's ending of the exemption.

John Whiting, a tax partner at Price Waterhouse, points out that those most affected by the change weren't the band members but their 270 roadies

working on the Road to Babylon tour.

Unlike the Stones, they aren't able to become non-resident and would have been hit by the retrospective change in tax law, even though they were already on tour when the Chancellor made his announcement.

Mr Whiting says: "The problem is that those most affected are construction workers, teachers, nurses and similar groups of workers who may have been on a one-year contract which straddled more than one tax year. So, they would be liable to pay earnings on their tax in the current tax year."

Airline pilots and oil rig and

charity workers have also been among the 20,000-plus people exempted by this loophole.

"Unlike the Stones, they don't have the option of deciding that they will not return to the UK for another year," says Mr Whiting. "Nor are they likely to be able in future to ask for a contract to be offered in such a way that it straddles more than a tax year, say for 14 months from March to May the year after next, thus making them liable to pay tax in the UK for the intervening 12 months."

In the US, a rule similar to that announced by Mr Gordon Brown applies also. But there, Mr Whiting says, the US Revenue has granted exemptions to those earning less than \$70,000 US (about £48,000), allowing many of its citizens working abroad to escape the tax trawl.

However, Mr Whiting says Revenue officials have discussed the matter with have been adamant that this is one tax avoidance loophole they are determined to close. No similar exemptions will apply here. "We have tried every argument, including the unfairness of making it retrospective, that those most affected would not be rich people and so on. I have to admit that we have not got very far," he adds.

"The only hope may lie in what music the Chancellor listens to. If it is the Rolling Stones, we may be in with a very small chance."

Of course, the change does not affect just the Stones. Accountants for the Spice Girls, Elton John and Oasis are all reported to be planning protests. The Spice Girls alone stand to lose upwards of £2m from their tour - or stay out of the country for far longer periods of time. "Of course, some people may see that as a blessing in disguise," says Mr Whiting.



A sincere form of flattery

**Sotheby's
sale of
contemporary
Indian art shows
that copying is
not always a
crime. By
John Windsor**

WHAT MAKES Indian art so Indian is that so much of it looks European. In Sotheby's third annual sale of contemporary Indian paintings on Wednesday, there is a Miró by Sunil Das, a Modigliani by B Vithal, and Picassos by Chavax Chavda, George Keyt and Krishna Shyamrao Kulkarni.

You could be excused for asking: "Where is the real contemporary Indian painting?" It is, of course, the wrong question. This is it.

If you view the sale, remember that you are entering a different culture – one in which copying is not a crime. A persistent force in India's artistic history is its craft tradition. For centuries, originality was not considered a virtue. Devoted students spent years copying their master's stylised images of Vedic deities. Even the master never signed his work.

Artistic originality, as we understand it, was let loose when the British founded art schools in Bengal and Madras in the middle of the last century. But their establishment, paradoxically, legitimised copying by Indians on a global scale.

For generations, Indian culture had preserved itself by adopting from foreign cultures whatever practices were compatible with its own, while rejecting the rest. It is a principle enshrined in the teachings of the Vedas. Without it, successive invasions by Aryans, Moguls, and finally the British, would have obliterated the Indianness of India.

Today, as members of the global village, Indian artists unashamedly draw from the artistic idioms of the world, whether it be Cubism, Chinese ink-and-brush, or their ancient, pre-Mogul flat-plane style.

It is no concern of Indian artists whether a style is ancient or modern. Like Indian historians of old, who recorded epic events but forgot the dates, Indian artists dip their brushes into art history as innocently as if they were choosing from different colours on their palette.

In the West, it is largely the dictates of fashion that condemn such copying as "derivative" art. Our view of history, art history, is in date order. Impressionism is history. Cubism is passé. So is Surrealism. Even trans-cultural Expressionism, adopted by artists in America, Germany and Britain in the Fifties, is old hat. With few exceptions – such as Desmond Morris's Surrealism – we don't paint in those styles any more.

But plenty of Indians do. As Sotheby's contemporary Indian painting consultant, Savita Apte, put it: "We were always post-modern before we were modern".

If you bring yourself to accept the cosmopolitanism of Indian art as a virtue, rather than a vice, you will be amazed at the variety and exuberance of Sotheby's 227 lots. You will even find a few paintings that resemble our preconception of what Indian painting looks like – those brightly-coloured, sugar-sweet pictures of deities that are sold to tourists. That idiom is, in fact, Western academic realism. Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906), having won (British) Governor's Gold Medals for his realistic paintings in the 1870s, went on to found a chromolithographic workshop in Bombay.



'Recumbent Woman II' (top) and 'Sri Krishna' (above) by George Keyt

Indians were painting in the natural-realistic style as long ago as the 16th century, to please the Mogul invaders. So when we come across Indian flat-plane, perspectiveless paintings of deities, such as those of Jamini Roy (1887-1972), estimated from £300 in the sale, we recognise immediately that they hark back to pre-Mogul style. At least we know where he was at. His "Krishna", gouache on card, is estimated £1,500-£2,500 in the sale. Some of the drawings of Ganesh Pyne (born 1937) look like stream-of-consciousness paintings by the American Jean-Paul

Basquiat. But they draw on literary allegories from 16th- and 17th-century Indian literature. His work is full of double takes. On one he has written: "The crisis you have to worry about worst is the one you don't see coming". A Woody Allen witicism – or a reference to the ancient Vedic injunction to meditate in order to avoid "the danger that has not yet come"?

Estimate from £800.

Best bet: the work of artists who best manage to integrate foreign styles with an unmistakable Indianness. The subtle watercolour "The Apple Girl of Sway" by Abdur Rahman Chughtai (1897-1975) adopts the flowing lines of Nouveau Art but could never be anything other than Indian. Estimate £10,000-£15,000. George Keyt (1901-1993) was capable of painting a slavishly Picassoesque "Recumbent Woman III" (£4,000-£6,000) but also of drawing an enchanting "Sri Krishna", £1,500-£2,500, using Picasso's richly lucid drawing technique to outline unmistakably Indian forms.

Kapil Jariwala, leading dealer in contemporary Indian paintings, has sold to the National Portrait Gallery their only portrait painting by an Indian – Bhupen Khakhar's "Salman Rushdie: The Moor" (1995). Khakhar (born 1934) paints homoerotic themes. You can't get more Western than that.

Names are beginning to emerge. The witty drawings of Jogen Chowdhury (born 1939) are rising in price. They resemble Bengal street market drawings – yet another idiom. At least we know where he was at. His "Krishna", gouache on card, is estimated £2,000-£3,000 in the sale. Some of the drawings of Ganesh Pyne (born 1937) look like stream-of-consciousness paintings by the American Jean-Paul



**INTERNET
INVESTOR**
ROBIN AMLOT

BRITAIN LEADS Europe in personal home computing and the Internet, according to a Global Consumer Study by the market research company Roper Starch Worldwide. Almost one in five of us already use PCs to do office work at home – more than anywhere else in Europe. We are also the most avid users of e-mail from home PCs, although the number of people with Internet access at home is still a small minority.

Nevertheless, Britain has a surprisingly high level of PC ownership: 38 per cent of the UK population aged between 18 and 65 have at least one computer at home (7 per cent have three or more). Furthermore, more than one in ten of us is likely to buy a computer for home use within the next 12 months.

Statistics like these, as much as optimistic forecasts about future web commerce, help explain why this week WH Smith purchased the Internet Bookshop for £2.8m and why the London Stock Exchange has established a new website as part of its £1m "Get Share Aware" advertising campaign.

The new Share Aware site aims to give private investors easy access to company news and share prices. Following an agreement between the Stock Exchange and 10 licensed data vendors who rank among the UK's leading providers of financial information, the website will offer share prices (mid, bid and offer prices) for all UK-listed, AIM (Alternative Investment Market) traded and SEAQ International companies.

You may also access company announcements transmitted via the Exchange's Regulatory News Service. The RNS carries all the announcements made by companies which are deemed to be price sensitive – those likely to move the share price. The information is available free of charge, subject to a 20-minute delay.

The website lists companies that offer share investment services and which are "member firms" of the London Stock Exchange. To

help you identify and contact organisations offering the services you are interested in, you can search on a number of categories including by region and by service offered, whether executive-only or for those firms offering discretionary or advisory services as well.

As part of the Share Aware campaign, the Stock Exchange has also published two booklets to guide potential private investors: *Being a Shareholder and A Guide to the London Stock Exchange – What You Need to Know*. You can view these on the website and order hard copies free of charge.

The Share Aware website runs alongside the London Stock Exchange's existing site which will continue to provide general information on the workings of the stock market in the UK. The wisdom of launching a campaign to attract more private investors at what appears to be the tail-end of a long bull-run in the market may be questionable. However, any initiative that seeks to boost investor understanding deserves some praise.

Among London Stock Exchange member firms, the newest arrival on the internet is investment manager and stockbroker Carr Sheppards. Its site includes pages explaining the firm's services, including charity and pension fund private-client portfolio management. It also details Carr Sheppards' unit trust, investment trust and PEP management services.

In addition to the financial information available and an interview with the firm's chief executive, Fred Carr, the site links to the charity the National Gardens Scheme. Carr Sheppards sponsors the NGS book *Gardens of England and Wales* since 1994 and is backing the charity's website to boost its fund-raising capabilities.

Share Aware: www.share-aware.co.uk; London Stock Exchange: www.londonstockex.co.uk; Carr Sheppards: www.carrsheppards.co.uk

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BRIAN TORA

A good dividend income gives something of a parachute to a share

THOSE of you who persevere to the end of these articles will see that I am described as the chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee. Actually, that statement is slightly misleading. We now have two committees that review our overall investment strategy - a stock selection committee and one charged with determining asset allocation.

But have you ever wondered what exactly is involved?

Our two committees met this week, so now is a good time to reflect upon what goes on when you are trying to establish an investment strategy.

Senior investment managers and analysts of this firm gather together to discuss the news that has emerged during the past few weeks, to look at the opinions of other respected investment houses and to try to give guidance to those charged with managing investments on behalf of private investors.

Ours is a long term approach. The cost of dealing and the tax implications of selling for many in this country will mean that we try not to change our mind too often or to vary our stance unless we are sure that a significant move is likely to take place.

In this we are different to institutional investors, where costs are significantly lower and capital taxation is usually less of a problem. Just at present we are trying to determine how best to deliver a more defensive stance to portfolios.

Now, defensive is one of those words that will mean different things to different people. You could argue that the most defensive position you can take is to move your portfolio into cash. But most investment professionals will interpret a defensive posture as concentrating on those shares that are expected to hold up reasonably well against any market shake-out.

In other words, if you consider share prices too high, but do not wish to be out of the market in case you are wrong and shares continue to move ahead, invest defensively.

And this is the paradox. Quite often a defensive portfolio will

under-perform in a bull market. More over, it is unrealistic to expect a portfolio constructed with a possible bear run in mind not to go down if the bottom falls out of the market. The hope is that it will not fall in value that much. But remember: this type of relative performance simply means that you lose less money than if you invested aggressively.

So, how do you invest defensively these days? Yield counts. A good dividend income gives something of a parachute to a share, providing the yield is not a reflection of a likely dividend cut, of course. Utilities fall into this category. So do some out-of-favour sectors, such as diversified industrials. But there is no guarantee that these sectors will prove as defensive as once they were. So much depends on why a market turns down.

Traditional domestic earners, like supermarket groups, have also been considered defensive investors in the past. The profits of companies like this tend to be less vulnerable to an economic downturn. However, again, traditional wisdom may not necessarily hold good for the future.

But one area that could prove to be defensive in the next bear market are the smaller to the mid-cap stocks. Already the FTSE mid-250 is starting to outperform the top 100 share index. Professional investors seeking value has been cited as the reason for this and it is true that smaller companies now tend to offer the higher yields and low earnings multiples that are no longer obtainable in the UK's 100 largest companies.

Moreover, there could be one interesting side effect of the next bear market. Just as indexed portfolios have helped drive the share prices of Britain's leading companies higher, so a market fall could be exacerbated by investors withdrawing their money from the same tracker funds. Concentrating on the shares outside the FTSE-100 might be the best defensive ploy you could make at present.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee.

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180 months

192 months

204 months

216 months

228 months

240 months

252 months

264 months

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1044 months

1056 months

1068 months

1080 months

1092 months

1104 months

1116 months

1128 months

1140 months

MONEY & ETHICS



Campaigners claim starvation in Africa is made worse by some banks' Third World loans

A hole in the wall machine with principles

Banks with a social conscience are few and far between, but they can still be found, writes Iain Morse

ANYONE who has searched in vain for a cashpoint machine on a wet Friday night knows that personal banking is as much about convenience as anything else. Instant access, credit, loans, cheque guarantee cards, overdrafts - it's difficult to imagine life without them.

The cost of this convenience is met partly from ruthless competition, staff redundancies, cutting overheads, the elimination of high street branches, all part of a trend to globalisation among large, retail banks. Profits, when they come, can be at the expense of human beings all over the world, or the environment in which we live.

Participating in this system as a consumer seems unavoidable, but raises difficult issues for the ethically minded. While selecting ethical investments on the basis of activities the banks avoid or support is relatively clear cut, the same cannot be said when selecting personal banking facilities.

The main reason for this lies in the way that our banking system has evolved. Large clearing banks now make most of their profits not from the services they offer to consumers but by investing and lending money directly to large companies or through the international money markets.

Faced with this, an ethically minded saver will want to question just where and to whom a particular bank lends money. But answers are difficult to obtain. Banks defend the confidentiality of their commercial operations for competitive reasons. This makes selecting a bank by the areas of business it avoids almost impossible.

Much of the available infor-

mation about which banks do what comes indirectly, through annual reports issued by public companies. For example, these show that Lloyds-TSB has acted as bankers to British American Tobacco (BAT), and provided banking services to British Aerospace, the UK's largest defence contractor.

The "big four" clearing banks - Lloyds, Barclays, Midland and NatWest are all involved in the provision of third world debt. Over the last three years, the Lloyds and Midland Boycott (Lamb) has put direct pressure on both banks over this issue. Account holders can join boycotts of this kind, penalising banks by moving their custom, but they will need to own shares in a bank and go to its AGM if they want to ask management difficult questions.

A handful of banks stand out as applying some ethical or environmental principles to their business activities. Among the larger clearing banks, Abbey National does not lend direct to companies, two-thirds of its business is UK based, and much of this is in domestic mortgages.

Among these are a range of "donation" credit cards, set up to benefit organisations such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace. Most of these charge a rate of monthly interest between 0.25 and 0.5 per cent higher than the bank's own card, with the excess going to the charity in question.

Mutually-owned building societies offer an alternative to banks, which ethically minded savers should find broadly acceptable. The 1997 Building Society Act specifies that no less than 75 per cent of a society's business assets must be held in domestic property, usually in the form of mortgages.

In theory, the remaining 25 per cent could be invested into companies or international money markets. But John Barker, of Bradford & Bingley, reckons: "Most of the busi-

ness-to-business lending by mutuals goes to housing associations, which are community-friendly by their nature." Because a mutual is owned by its members, issues of this kind can be raised and voted on at annual members' meetings.

The 1997 Act also enabled them to offer the same range of financial products and services as banks, such as credit cards, loans for purposes other than mortgages, foreign currency, travel and home insurance and instant access accounts. Most societies might pass a "negative screening" test - unless you object to their involvement in the housing market. But only two stand out for following "positive" criteria on lending.

The Ecology Building Society offers savings accounts with money reinvested into ecological projects and lent for mortgages involving the renovation of derelict property. Meanwhile, the Catholic Building Society focuses on offering mortgages to first-time buyers, often women on low incomes.

Rob Harrison, editor of the *Ethical Investor* magazine, argues that there are deeper reasons for choosing a mutual against a bank: "They are our last line of defence against the final globalisation of banking and credit. The multinational banks replacing them are impossible to control." The growing choice these ethical institutions offer make it easier to assert customer priorities against the global banking system.

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Economic forecasts are as precise as the weather

RICHARD NIXON may not have been America's most elegant or articulate president, but in economic matters he did enjoy one great advantage over many of his more agreeable successors: he did know what he wanted.

Told on one occasion that he should be concerned about the potential impact of a policy initiative on the Italian currency, he memorably replied, "I don't give a *** about the lira", which was honest, if a little short of being diplomatic.

On another occasion, he stepped up to introduce the man he had nominated as chairman of the Federal Reserve, the economist Arthur Burns. "I respect his independence," he told the assembled company at the White House ceremony.

"However, I hope that independently he will conclude that my views are the ones that should be followed."

When this was greeted with a round of applause, he smiled and turned to the new Fed chairman: "You see, Dr Burns, that is a standing vote for lower interest rates and more money."

On that occasion, most contemporary historians agree, the central banker may have taken the implied advice of the President, an old friend of his, rather too seriously. The lax policies which Burns presided over contributed to the economic recovery which helped to get Nixon re-elected in 1972, but they proved something of a disaster thereafter, as the US economy slid into inflation and towards the great economic crisis of the mid-1970s.

Even before Opec ratcheted up the price of oil, there was simply too much easy money around and prices generally moved out of control. Arthur Burns left office with a much lower reputation than he enjoyed when he first took over.

We have been luckier with his successors, but it has still taken 20 years for all western countries to come to the conclusion that a genuinely independent central bank is a necessary bulwark against the insidious incursion of inflation.

When the new Labour Government, as one of its first acts last year, handed control over interest rates to an independent monetary policy committee at the Bank of England, it was a welcome sign that this new orthodoxy had spread a long way across the political spectrum.

Investors in particular



THE
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Investors in particular

have paid a high price for allowing governments to manipulate interest rates in the past. Politicians are always likely to find themselves, like Nixon, erring on the side of easy money, in the knowledge that the bill for lax monetary control need not come in until at least two years later - which often (strange coincidence) happens to be after the next election.

The markets were right to take a positive view of the decision to hand control of interest rates to the Bank of England. The decision has clearly been a factor in the continued strength of the market over the past 15 months and the continued decline in inflationary expectations over the same period.

But the mistake that many investors make, as we have again seen this week, is to believe that the act of making the central bank independent

is in itself a solution to the problem of inflation and economic growth. It is not - and for a simple reason.

That reason is that determining the right interest rate policy is extremely difficult. Quite apart from the fact that interest rates are a very blunt instrument, which affect different groups of society in different ways, it is also perfectly possible for highly learned and reasonable experts to study the evidence and come to completely different conclusions, not just about what to do, but even about what is happening to the economy in the first place.

Economies are complex social systems, and judging where we are at any stage in the cycle with any degree of precision is effectively - and unfortunately - unknowable.

That is one reason why economists' forecasts - just like weather forecasts - tend to be wrong so often: there simply is no clear-cut answer, except, of course, in hindsight.

What matters most is not who is making the interest rate decisions, but whether or not he/she (or they, if it is a committee) are able to come up with the right answers. To put together a track record as a successful policymaker in this area, you need luck and judgement, as well as economic expertise.

Alan Greenspan, the current chairman of the Federal Reserve, the US central bank, has enjoyed a quite extraordinary record of success in the past few years. The US economy has never before enjoyed such a long run of continuous growth, limited to low non-existent inflation. There are times, it is clear, when even Mr Greenspan wonders how it has all been achieved, since he knows that while the press likes to portray him as omniscient, the reality is very different. He has much trouble at calling the runes as most of the rest of us do.

In the UK, the new monetary policy committee which now sets interest rates in

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Holiday decisions to regret

Under a scorching sun the dreams start of a little place in the Mediterranean. But trying to make that a reality can be a sobering experience for legal novices, says Mary Wilson

EDWARD AND JENNIFER BEVIS have learnt the hard way about paying for a property in a foreign country—before it is built. After nine years of trials and tribulations, the couple have ended up losing £25,000 and their dream holiday home.

"We wanted to buy a retirement home in the Mediterranean and in 1988 attended several exhibitions and shows to see what was available," says Jennifer. "A salesman from Tavernstar, an agent in Surrey, approached us with properties in Turkey, and, as they were much cheaper than France or Spain, we agreed to go on a four-day inspection trip and we found ourselves in Bodrum within the week."

They saw a wide range of properties at different stages of completion and eventually fell in love with the magnificent view from a hill-

side overlooking Bodrum. If they wanted to buy this one, they would have to do so "off-plan", based on architects' drawings and before it was built. "The plans seemed to have been carefully drawn up by the developers, whose company was registered in Istanbul," she says.

The villa, which was still a hole in the ground, was going to cost them £32,933 with an initial deposit of £1,000. "We were quite careful," says Edward. "We found a Turkish solicitor in England to look over the contract and we thought we were well covered in Turkey. But we even discovered we were badly misinformed. We were told the developer owned the land and the reason for the property costing a bit more than usual was because of its position, which we could understand."

They gave their power of attorney to Pozcu & Collard, the Turkish agents for Tavernstar. Having paid their deposit, a sales contract was drawn up, at which time the first instalment of £12,743 was paid. But when they visited Bodrum, in spring 1990, the foundations had hardly been laid.

They were told that the building would be finished on time and, in January 1991, paid a second instalment of £9,890. In April, they were told the villa was being plastered, but in August 1991 it transpired that the development company did not have the money to continue the project and two landowners—whom they previously knew nothing about—had placed a lien on the properties going up on the site to protect their interests.

The landowner was unable to be

located and, at the end of the year, he died after a car accident. The inheritance laws proved to be insurmountable. Pozcu & Collard closed their Bodrum offices and, after trying many avenues to retrieve their money, the Bevises gave up.

"Although we were advised to sue Pozcu & Collard, we were reluctant to become involved in costly litigation," says Edward.

There are several lessons to be learnt from this sad story. "You should never sign a contract with anyone who is not the vendor and, when handing over money, you should make sure that it is given to a notary or someone who has a client account so the money cannot be touched," says Steve Emmett, of Brian A French agents and a former chairman of Fopdac (the Federation of Overseas Prop-

erty Developers and Consultants).

Fopdac has no agents registered with it in Turkey. "We took a look at Turkey some years ago and decided not to get involved. Claims to freehold title were not sustainable, and I was amazed to see people offering freehold title," says Mr Emmett—a situation the Bevises were obviously not aware of.

Title of land and property should always be carefully checked. In Italy, where Brian A French sells property, all title is registered, so anyone can check the owner of land and property and whether there is a mortgage on it. Not making the correct checks could mean finding out that you have mortgage repayments to make of which you knew absolutely nothing about.

Title is similarly registered in Spain and Portugal, and there is consumer legislation that protects a purchaser from a developer going bankrupt. "The developer gets a bank guarantee or insurance, so, if the worst happens, any monies which have been paid over will be compensated," says Michael Cornish, of Cornish & Co, a solicitor specialising in property purchases in Spain and Portugal. You might have to pay an insurance premium, but it is well worth doing.

"You should, of course, always see a solicitor who specialises in the area you are buying in. A reputable solicitor will make all the title checks before you hand over any money," says Mr Cornish. All reputable estate agents in Spain and Portugal are licensed, and Fopdac can also provide a list of its members.

"The difficulty is that people get very excited about buying property

when on holiday and are easily parted with their money," Mr Cornish says. "The saying goes: 'When the sun comes out, the brains go in.' And, no matter how many times you tell them, people still come to us when it is too late. They are offered an option agreement, that they are expected to sign on the spot, which forms an agreement. There is little we can do about it, except carry out all the searches and hope that nothing untoward shows up."

Edward and Jennifer Bevis have certainly learnt their lesson: "We will never, ever again buy a property off-plan. We would only consider something if it was completed and ready to move into."

Brian A French: 0171-284 0114. Fopdac: 0181-941 5583. Cornish & Co: 0181-478 3300.

An office in the sticks can be heaven or hell

Modern technology makes it easy, in theory, to escape the pressures of city living and work from a rural idyll. But all may not be as straightforward as it first appears, says Mary Wilson

IF YOU are fed up with living and working in the city, with all the accompanying stress, pollution and parking problems, it can be tempting to think about moving out to the sticks.

Here, all the country lovers will tell you, you can work from the comfort of your home—modern communications making it as easy as flicking a switch. But when looking for the house of your dreams, which will become your workplace as well, there are a number of pitfalls to watch out for which you might not think about until it is too late.

Amanda MacCaw, a public relations consultant, lived and worked in London until last year, when she got married and decided to make a weekend cottage in Warwickshire her and her husband's main home. In London, Amanda had worked from Chestertons Residential, one of her clients, so was used to the machinery of a

large office to back her up. "I now work from a converted garage about 20 yards from the house," she says. "There are several things I hadn't thought about. Post is a great problem—it rarely gets here the next day and the last post in the village is 3.30 in the afternoon. I either have to be incredibly organised or build in to my day the time to drive to the post office."

"You need to make sure you have all the kit you need—running out of fax rolls in London is no problem, in the country it means a major journey or waiting a day for them to be delivered. Machinery going wrong is also fairly worrying."

To work from home, you have to think ahead. When you make a stationery order, you need to check through everything you might need in the next few weeks—putting in an order for just one thing could mean you have to pay carriage charges.

"My first major crisis was when the toner for my printer ran out. I found a spare one, but discovered to my horror it was the wrong one. I had to waste an hour driving into town to buy another one," says Amanda.

Another difficult day followed when the electricity was cut off. "Since then we have had quite a few electricity cuts, but

there is nothing I can do about it. When it first happened, I thought, well, I can't use my computer or fax machine, so I'll spend the day on the phone. But then I remembered my database was on my computer, so I could only call people I knew the number of."

"However, the benefits far outweigh the negative points.

There is nothing I can do about it. When it first happened, I thought, well, I can't use my computer or fax machine, so I'll spend the day on the phone. But then I remembered my database was on my computer, so I could only call people I knew the number of."

Working in an environment that is physically out of the home, such as a garden shed or garage, is often far better than converting the spare bedroom. Not only

are you removed from home demands—washing, cleaning or making that extra cup of coffee, you can mentally detach yourself from home more easily—especially if you have children."

Even working in London can have its problems. Deborah Batsiek discovered, when she moved from central London to East Sheen, that there were no

10 TIPS ON WORKING FROM HOME

- Install a business phone line, rather than a private one. It costs £9.23 a quarter extra, but there are more discounts available and if your phone or fax go on the blink, the service is remarkably faster.
- Be prepared to spend more on heating and electricity if you are working from a converted shed or garage.
- Make sure you are always well stocked with stationery.
- Make a list of local people who can help in a crisis.
- Use travelling times properly for working or sleeping, depending on which is required most.
- Don't forget to add your equipment to your house contents insurance policy.
- If you are in a service industry, be prepared to go to clients rather than the other way round.
- Be prepared to pay more for fast replacements to save lost working hours.
- Keep paper records of all your database for emergencies.
- Be organised—it's the only way to work from home efficiently.

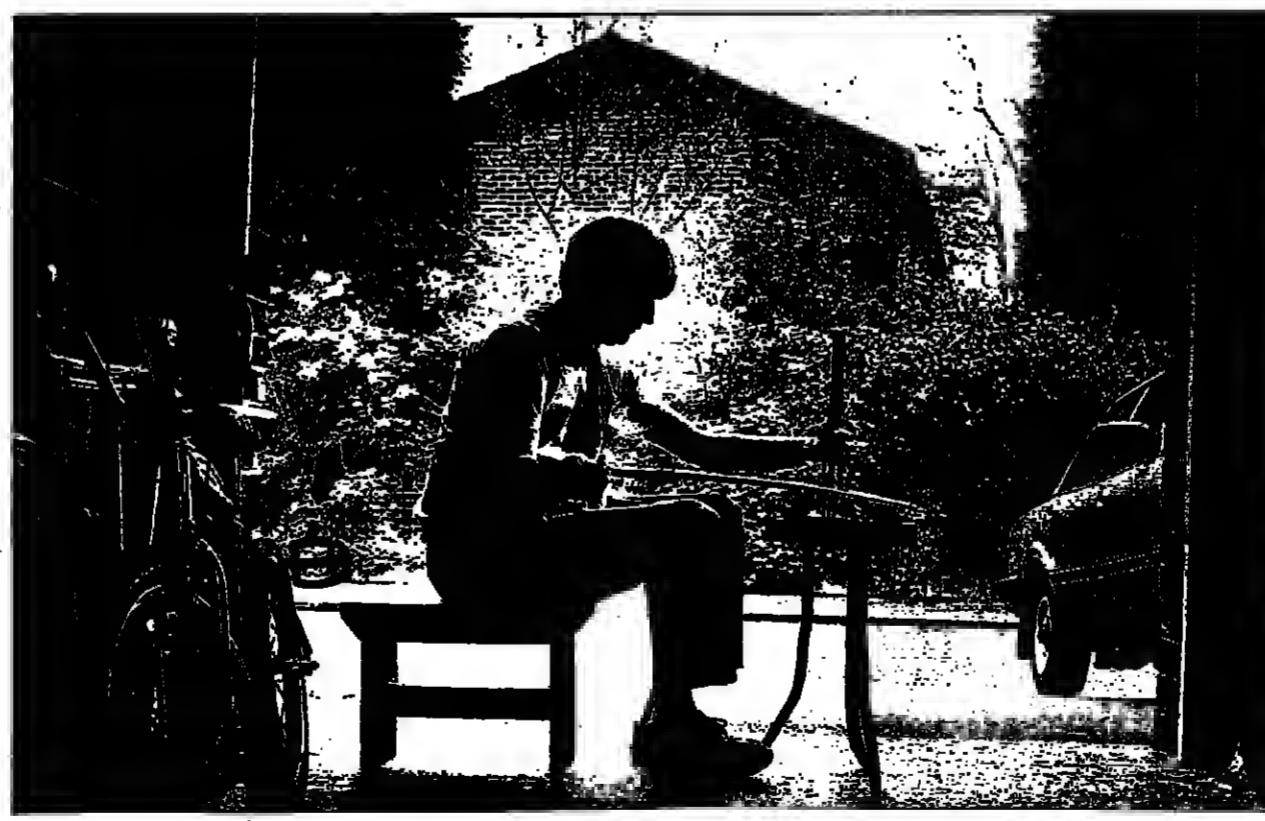
post boxes within ten minutes' walk which would take hard-backed A4 envelopes.

"And my most important investment was a weighing machine for letters. This has made all the difference to my life. Beforehand, I spent so much time queuing at the post office."

Paul Greenwood, managing director of Stacks Relocation (01866 860528), has been asked by many city people to search for a house they can work from in the country. "I would advise caution before relocating to the sticks and relying on modern technology for all your business needs," he says.

"Ninety-five per cent of your business may be conducted by phone, fax and the superhighway, but ask yourself some searching questions before committing yourself," he says. "Does the area have good mobile-telephone reception, find out about the postal service and what about photocopying? If yours breaks down, or you don't have one, you need to know where the nearest service is."

So choosing a home from which you intend to work needs to be thought about very carefully. If you pick somewhere from which it is easy to operate and where there are back-up facilities close by, your life will be heaven. Find a house miles from anywhere and your working life could be more like hell.



Working in an environment that is physically out of the home is often far better than converting the spare bedroom.



PENNY JACKSON

IT DOES seem more than a little surprising that after all the talk of conservation and sympathetic building in the countryside, an Exmoor village should be fighting plans for a development of houses more suited to suburban Surrey than rural Somerset.

Roadwater, a long straggly village, has a character that would be altered by the building of 12 executive-type homes on an open plot at its heart. Local residents are pinning their hopes on changes being made to the plans. They argue it is not "Nimbyism" - they would welcome smaller houses, even a mixed use, but nothing on the present scale, which even includes pavements and street lighting.

Where they are not alone is in suffering from a bad planning decision made in less sensitive times. It contravenes Exmoor's most recent policies and Neil Pope, its planning officer, agrees that it would not be approved today and clearly hopes to salvage what he can from the ill-thought-out situation he has inherited.

John Nethercott, for the Council for the Protection of Rural England in West Somerset, says it is the last big site on Exmoor and should produce something of which the village could be proud.

So despite pronouncements from the Government, conservationists and planners, the Roadwaters of this world must go into the next century with a scheme in tow that everyone, bar the developer, deplores. There is always, of course, a way out through compensation. Who would pay it, though, is the argument. So what better way for a Millennium Fund to spend its money than to buy out a horrible mistake that could end up as a permanent memorial to 20th century insensitivity.

MORE scenes of buyers queuing to snap up well-priced flats in London, but this time it is to the east of the city. At Greenwich Heights, a 10-storey block with views over the City and the Millennium Dome, half the entire first phase went under offer last weekend at prices from £29,000 to £114,500. As a result, the second phase has been brought forward from the autumn to this weekend. Agents FPD Savills: 0171-456 6300.

COUNTRY cottages, better for a while represented better value for money than larger country houses earmarked by affluent Londoners, have been increasing in price recently. In Hampshire, where thatched cottages have always commanded a premium, there are two Grade II-listed properties on the market through agents Lane Fox. Asking price for Box Cottage in Upper Wield is £235,000 and for Queens Meadow in Monk Sherborne, £325,000.



Helene Glucksman and her children are happy in their new home, though they do have some reservations

Nicola Kurtz

Americans may pay a fortune to rent your house, but they find English homes leave much to be desired. Penny Jackson explains how to make Uncle Sam happy

ANYONE rubbing their hands in glee at the prospect of letting their house to Americans during a stint abroad might have to swallow hard before bankrolling a mouthwatering rent.

More likely than not it's out with the carpet, out with the expensive wallpaper and out with the paint-brush. American tenants may be prepared to pay more than £3,000 a month, but only if they get exactly what they want.

Big, bland and beige, says one agent who has the "wish list" imprinted on her mind. Even though there is competition for family houses, second-best doesn't enter the vocabulary of Americans with a corporate budget.

First-timers in the UK are all struck by the same shortcomings of the English home, and what as guests they are happy to tolerate, as tenants they are not. They wonder not unreasonably, why life is so unnecessarily uncomfortable.

"All the Brits tell you that there are no bugs here, but there are," was Helene Glucksman's first discovery. "I had been warned but I'm amazed there are no screens on the windows. We had this flying monster the other day which we tried to flush down the toilet. It didn't go, of course, and

that's another thing - the plumbing.

"You don't have mixers on the taps, so there is a tiny window of opportunity before your hand gets burnt off," says Mrs Glucksman. But the shortage of space couldn't be laughed off as easily as the threat from biting insects. "We took the house on condition that a third reception room was added. So a new extension has been built and the cloakroom redone," she explains.

She and her husband and their two sons have taken a house in Weybridge, Surrey, and expect to be in England for four years, long enough to find the loss of family living space more than a minor irritation. "We loved the house apart from that, and we saw everything from the impeccable to houses so terrible I couldn't believe they were on the market. You just have to get used to things being so much smaller."

She might have added expensive, as rents, such as the £4,000 a month paid for their house, can be twice as

much as they would pay in the States.

Victoria Lamb, of Oak Residential Lettings, whose business is virtually all with Americans, says they expect a high standard for the money.

"It is worth owners making some of the changes that attract American tenants."

Terry Inskip, of Hampton International's Sunningdale office, has learnt to be tactful with owners.

"If I went into a typical family house and reeled off all the things that need doing, they wouldn't go any further.

But at the very least they will have to replace a bathroom carpet with a washable floor, put pumps on showers, build in cupboards and upgrade kitchens."

She gives an example of a delightful house in a quiet spot being impossible to let because the kitchen was out of date and the bath pink.

"Only when we persuaded the owner to spend money on replacing them could we find a tenant."

"People can let their houses for as much as £8,500 a month in Sunningdale, and in areas close to American schools and London airport an increasing number of investors are buying houses between £300,000 and £400,000 and Americanising them. They can expect a return of at least 10 per cent gross a year."

That is, as long as it's not old and charming on the inside as well out. In that case it is doomed to sit on the unwanted list.

"Even when you explain to some Americans what to expect, they are still amazed. 'Most will laugh and try to renegotiate their package but a few will say 'to hell with England' and refuse to work here at all,'" says Ms Inskip.

In St John's Wood, north London, Linda Dempster from Denver, Colorado, is still struggling with living on three floors and too many stairs. "There is never enough storage space, the bathrooms are too

small and as for the size of the refrigerator..."

Under-the-workshop fridges have always had Americans in fits of laughter and they will find space somewhere in the house for the double-door US model. "We know how lucky we are with this house, though," says Mrs Dempster.

The Dempsters rent the carriage house of what was the Cuban embassy, through John D Wood. The agency's Dawn Shepperson finds that long-established Americans often do the best selling job. "They'll say things like 'this is a closet but here they call it a bedroom', but while joking about the house they are also bringing some people down to reality."

It is not always easy to sell the loss of handpainted walls there are financial blips set against the amounts that British owners can earn from American tenants. But there are limits. When a family moving into a Surrey house asked Victoria Lamb to change the dull water in the garden pond so that it looked fresh and blue, she had to explain that it was a wildlife pond and that everything in it would die. "They told me 'Don't worry, we'll feed the fish'. We won that one, but they clearly thought it was mad."

The Home Counties are becoming decidedly cosmopolitan and landlords are delighted, reports Robert Liebman

Welcome to expatriate country



Linda and Don: "Even now, our friends ask us to notify them if we are leaving"

Nicola Kurtz

finding an ideal home at the last minute.

Other families were not so lucky. "We hear of many families who had enormous difficulty finding a nice house, and even now our friends ask us to notify them if we are leaving," Linda says. Even for them, a tenant's life can be fraught: "We have a lease, although not everyone does. The leases are typically for a year minus a day with renewal clauses. At renewal, the owner can come

back I know people who have had to move every year."

Linda and Don have not been inconvenienced by returning landlords. But when the boss says it is time to up sticks, they have to do so in fairly short order. "Minimum notice from Don's company is three months. That's the part that is hardest for the children." If they vacated now, Linda has no doubts that the house would be relet immediately and at a higher rent.

"After we left England in 1993, we heard that our house was vacant for nine months, but there are far more expats here now. The American Women of Surrey has about three times more members than when we were here before. Traditionally the wife follows the husband, but now I see more women managers coming, trailing husbands."

Many multinational firms contribute to at least part of the rent and, as the rents soar, they have little

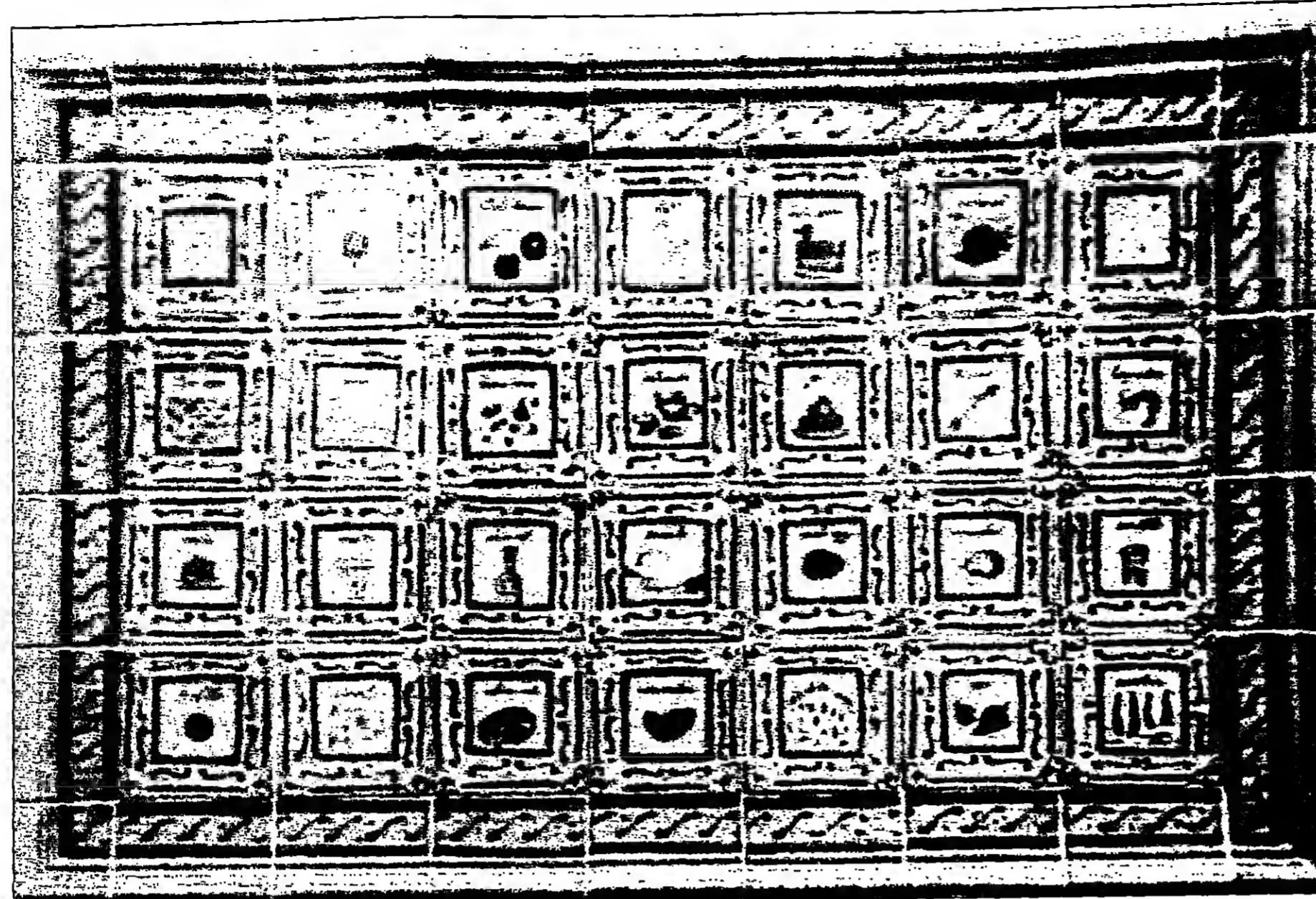
choice but to do so. Victoria Lamb, of Oak Residential Lettings, in Weybridge, says that monthly rentals greater than £10,000 are not unusual, "and the going rate for 10,000 sq ft in the exclusive St George's Hill, for example, is £15,000". Rent of £10,000-plus usually means a mansion, indoor swimming-pool and spacious grounds. More typical rents are in the £5,000-£10,000 range, and, these days, furniture may not be included: "Since the new fire regulations a few years ago, some landlords are starting to rent unfurnished properties, and many Americans are bringing their furniture with them," says Ms Lamb. Tenants and their employers are also pressuring landlords to provide longer leases. Ms Lamb says: "The typical lease used to be for six months or a year, but now people want to rent longer; they don't want to be chucked out after a year. Increasingly the company wants an employee to sign a lease with options to renew for a second and third year."

She also believes that some property owners are cheating themselves by harbouring old-fashioned views of the landlord-tenant battlefield. "More and more people are coming over to work and live here, and landlords should realise that the law protects them today much more than in the past." Some landlords are all too well aware of the balance of forces. "I had a tenant who was so desperate to find a place that she agreed to rent a flat as soon as we opened the door. The landlord doesn't do any maintenance, and the tenant is doing the maintenance herself. Some landlords are taking advantage."

The few British renters in this area tend to be transients of one sort or another, says Fiona Honey, residential letting manager of Curchods. "They are between houses because of divorce or young couples just starting out or someone returning from an overseas posting. They expect to pay £1,000 or £1,200 maximum, and when they discover the extortionate amounts of the actual rents, they are stunned." If they stay for any length of time, it is as owners, not tenants.

Christopher Hodgson Estate Agents, 01227 266441
Curchods, 01932 857705
JSC Lettings, 01344 845535
Oak Residential, 01932 821 611

RAISING THE white flag is the only sensible option for most British families thinking of renting a house in the Home Counties. Hordes of multinational managers have invaded, and, in a war whose weapons consist exclusively of money, they are winning hands down. According to Canterbury estate agent Christopher Hodgson, "localised situations drive the letting market. East Kent is driven by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals and Canterbury University, and west Kent is a dormitory for London". In the Surrey, Berkshire and Buckingham corridor, multinationals such as Sony and Procter & Gamble are the magnets, but "regardless of where the husband works, it is the school that determines where the family rents", says Terry Ward-Hall, of JSC Lettings, in Virginia Water. The school is usually American, even if the family isn't. "For the international expatriate community, the one constant, regardless of which country they are sent to, is the American school," Mr Ward-Hall explains. Linda, a well travelled American who used to work for the Surrey multinational that employs her husband, confirms this view. "Our children's schools are pri-



Celebrity squares

Handpainted ceramic tiles are beautiful, fashionable – and often expensive.
Rosalind Russell looks at a novel way to add luxury to a kitchen or bathroom

DAVID BOWIE has them. So does Roger Daltrey, Sally Burton and Robert de Niro. The Sultan of Brunei has them in his shooting lodge in Scotland. What are they? Hand-painted decorative wall tiles. In fact all these celebs bought them from Paris Ceramics, the company owned and run by Charlie Smallbone, the original founder of Smallbone Kitchens.

The kind of tiles we are talking about here cost the equivalent of a piece of art. Which is almost what they are, as they are designed and painted by the firm's own artists. A 54-tile panel of tiles called the Chef's Alphabet – which takes in everything from Artichoke to Zucchini, by way of K for Kipper – costs £265, including the tile border. That's an expensive splashback in anybody's recipe book, but it makes a striking centrepiece in a keen cook's kitchen. You can always buy them one at a time at £23 each and put in requests to friends and family at birthdays and Christmas.

A Seawater Fish panel of 35 tiles costs £900, or you can invest in just one of the five (haddock, plaice, lobster, bass or mackerel) which cover between six and eight tiles, from £180.

At that price you would have to be very sure you weren't going to move house for a few years, although estate agents do tell of tight-fisted clients prising tiles from the bathroom walls and carrying them off with the cutlery and curtains.

A new series by Paris Ceramics is the Adam cups, inspired by the work of Robert Adam. Neo-classical in design and five by five inches in size, they are painted in the soft Georgian colours of blue, green and



gold and feature swags, festoons, griffins and goddesses. Each tile costs £45; to buy the panel of 12, including matching relief border tiles, costs £607.

Even a small panel of expensive non-mass-produced tiles in a room can be enough to boost the rest of the look. World's End Tiles, which recently extended its Battersea

showroom, holds over 5000 different designs, which should be enough to cover most tastes. But people are moving towards lustres, matt white and modern metallic finishes, says the company's Alex Portelli.

Although it is the only commercial tile manufacturer in London, World's End also imports ranges

etched with his trademark greyhound, the tiles are backed in grey, blue or white, giving them depth.

"Each movement of the greyhound as it runs on each square is different, giving the effect of an old-fashioned flick book," says Portelli. "But of course you have to like dogs..." The greyhound tiles cost £17.04 each.

The firm has also just launched the Zillig range, inspired by the mosaic and boiserie of the North African Berbers. The tiles come in six sun-bleached and weathered colours: antique white, yellow, aqua-green, blue, manganese and earth red. Prices start at £37 per square metre. As a final bonus, World's End's showroom includes a coffee bar and a crèche.

A handmade lookalike tile at a much cheaper cost is made by Stoke-on-Trent ceramic-tile makers H&R Johnson (more popularly known under the Cristal brand name). Their new Cotswold collection has six different surface textures with deliberate colour variations.

There's a note on the box advising buyers not to try to even up the ones with the same finish on the wall, or the effect will be ruined.

The designs are all named after places in the Cotswolds, including Fairford: that design is based on the stained glass window in the medieval church. The Sherbourne is patterned with bows of spring flowers such as hyacinths and tulips. A box of 25 plain tiles costs £1.99; the Sherbourne decorative tiles, with eight in a pack, is £12.45.

Paris Ceramics 0171-371 7778 or in Harrogate 01423 523 877; World's End Tiles 0171-519 2100; H&R Johnson 01782 575575

On the tiles...
 Chef's Alphabet (top) by Paris Ceramics,
 Sherbourne (left), from H&R Johnson's new
 Cotswold collection and Part of World's End's new
 Zillig Collection (above)

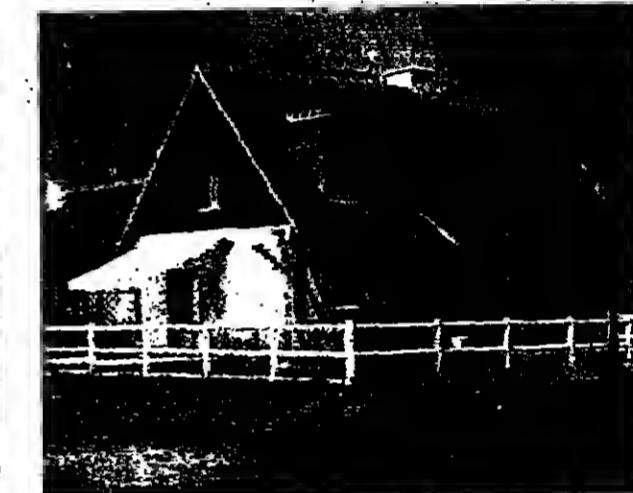
THREE TO VIEW

NEWLY BUILT
HOMES



NO REDECORATING or window replacement to worry about with a brand new house like this one in Bodham, in a small development between Holt and Sheringham in Norfolk. The four-bedroom brick and flint house has sealed unit double glazing, an open fireplace in the sitting room and a 23ft kitchen already

fitted with units, gas hob and oven. There's a separate utility room with plumbing for a washing machine. Upstairs there is a shower room and family bathroom and outside there's a double garage with power and light. Nothing to do but walk in. £119,000 through G4 (01692 629821).



WHY BUY a decrepit old barn in France when you could have a brand new house in Deauville in Normandy? Originally marketed for French buyers, the development at Le Domaine de Clarefontaine attracted so many British passers-by, it was decided to sell them here as well. Nine hundred metres from the beach and town centre – and

200kms from Paris – the flats and houses are surrounded by wooded grounds and have a communal swimming pool and two tennis courts. There will be a resident caretaker. Prices start at £47,000 for a one-bed flat, up to £85,000 – £120,000 for a four bedroom house. A Place In France (01705 832949).



GREENWOOD HOUSE near Yarmouth, on the Isle of Wight, is a recently built six-bedroom house overlooking the Solent. The four-storey house stands in six acres of grounds including formal walled terraces and has planning permission for a stable block. On

the lower ground floor there is a games room, sauna, bar, wine store and gun room. The attic floor is arranged for staff or guests, with sitting-room, bedroom, bathroom and kitchenette. £395,000 through John D Wood (0190 677233).

It's brand new, but is it necessarily better?

FOR THE privilege of obtaining pristine new homes, buyers generally pay a premium – usually between 5 and 15 per cent more than the price of second-hand properties. What exactly does the extra money buy? And what is the pay-off when the homeowner sells?

New homes vary considerably in quality and value according to the developer, contractor, incentives and various market forces.

By definition, they boast the latest technology and, whether in 1998 or 1978, by and large they mean less maintenance and making good the mistakes and omissions of previous owners. But the best of today's new builds go beyond technological advances to satisfy owners to a degree that is probably unprecedented. Appliances will not only be new but are likely to be built in. Most homeowners will be able to select in advance things such as the colour and quality of carpets and tiles, and the placement of some interior walls.

Whether urban or suburban, new

homes offer high levels of security, which also means that roads on new estates are planned to be safer for children, according to Colin Gabb, managing director of Bryant Homes South.

Developers didn't always listen so attentively to customers. Why the change? "The first day of the last recession forced developers to rethink their product, to give value for money," says Paul Vallone, sales and marketing director for Berkeley.

To meet customer expectations, builders such as Leing and Bryant imported ideas from elsewhere, notably America.

The Yankee influence is immediately evident in Leing homes in Cuffley, Hertfordshire, which boast enormous basement rooms. Leing Bryant and a few other developers also build "bonus rooms" – rooms in the loft space. Such refinements increase the property's value for developer and homeowner alike.

But already poor-quality conversions and waterside properties have appeared, built by developers out to

Developers offer a variety of temptations to be the first owner of a newly-built home, but you will often pay a premium price. Assess each deal on its merits, says Robert Liebman

make a quick tidy buck. "By and large, new houses have pinched rooms, smaller and lower than older properties. They are not built very well," says Malcolm Hollis, a chartered surveyor who advised Granada TV on the recent *Builders from Hell* programme.

A builder can be merely unscrupulous rather than downright diabolical to cause misery. Five years after Helen and James bought their new home on an estate in the North, Helen is still annoyed that they can't extend the garage and build a bedroom over the extension. "Our surveyor found that the houses were too near one another and our builder had laid the pipes too near

the surface. We wasted £800 on plans and a survey."

This builder was conserving space. Many contractors indulge in "spec-savvy" – using cheaper, inferior products than were agreed on.

Some new cars are lemons, and all new cars plummet in value the moment they leave the showroom. Similarly with houses, but owners of new properties have the extra worry that, if you are on an estate where other homes are still being built, your short-term value drops even further.

When the dust literally settles, your one-careful-owner home enters the lists like any other second-hand property. "Once you've lived in it

then obviously for the next buyer it's no longer new, but the fundamental point is that its price will still be rising. The depreciation depends on local conditions and is likely to be overwhelmed by the fact that prices are rising in any case," says Paul Sanderson, Nationwide's head of research.

According to Halifax statistics, prices for existing homes have steadily inched up over the last year, whereas average prices for new houses were all over the place. In May 1997 they declined 2 per cent, but last May they rose 11.7 per cent. This seemingly magnificent leap is meaningless. The monthly statistical sample for new homes in

statistics are the specifics for any particular housebuyer: the local factors, such as the actual position of new developments, and the schools, roads and shops. Many of these factors determine the price performance of any one area.

"Quite often the differences between areas in the same region can be greater than between two regions. Local conditions really dominate," he adds.

From another quarter, Richard Cotton emphasises differences between developers who build to different qualities. "We can identify who we would, and who we would not, buy from," he says. Mr Cotton is a partner at Clintons Daniel Smith in charge of their London residential agency.

Ordinary buyers can also decide who to buy from. Mr Hollis says: "If I were buying a new home, I would ask others already on the estate about their homes. If I were the first, I would spend whatever was required on surveys and inspections to obtain reliable information."